

A SPIRITUAL TREASURY FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD:

CONSISTING OF A MEDITATION FOR EACH EVENING IN THE
YEAR UPON SELECT TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

Humbly intended to establish the Faith, promote the Comfort,
and influence the Practice of the Followers of the Lamb.

By

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VOLUME 2

In Christ are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.
Col. 2:3.

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PREFACE.

Christian Reader,

My former work of this kind met with a very favourable reception. I have great and abundant cause to adore and praise the God of all grace, that I have not laboured in vain; for the Lord, of his unmerited mercy, has been pleased to accompany the reading of it with blessing to many, very many precious souls. I desire in unfeigned humility, to say, "Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the glory."

With a view to this, I trust, I have been encouraged to publish this *second part*, for every *Evening* in the year. If so unworthy a person may be permitted to adopt apostolic language, I would say, "This *second part*, Beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I would stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful," first, of what the Lord Jesus hath done for you, is to you, is now, and will be incessantly doing for you at the right hand of God, till he has brought you to be with him where he is, to be like him as he is, to behold his eternal glory, and to triumph everlastingly in his precious salvation. And that ye may be mindful, 2dly, of the infinite and most powerful obligations you are ever under to cleave to Christ with full purpose of heart: to abide in him by precious faith; and to glorify him by an humble, holy, obedient walk and conversation.

For your kind and candid reception of my poor labours, I beg your acceptance of my unfeigned thanks. And as there is

cause to apologize, for presuming to send forth a *second part* of the same kind, suffer me to offer my reasons for it.

1st. I find there were of old, *hewers of wood, and drawers of water to the congregation*, Deut. 29:11. Bound by every endearing tie of the everlasting love, free-grace, and unmerited mercy of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, gladly would I labour in that capacity, according to the ability which the Lord giveth, to his glory, and the edification and comfort of my fellow-sinners. Though not blessed with the tongue of the eloquent, nor the pen of the learned—though neither called nor qualified to preach the everlasting gospel; yet if our Lord be pleased to enable me, to hew some few splinters of wood, which may kindle the fire of love in the hearts of his dear people; and to draw a little water from *The Rock, Christ*, which may refresh their spirits, my soul delights in being thus honourably employed. Dear Lord, I will rejoice in this work—love and thank thee for thus employing me—and if thou art pleased to bless my soul in it, and bless it to others. O do thou enable me to give the whole and sole glory to thee, and keep me very humble at thy feet.

2d. Having found that many Christian friends constantly read a meditation out of the former Treasury every MORNING, therefore judged a SECOND PART for the EVENING might be acceptable also, on account of its variety, having written upon texts entirely different from the former.

3d. I was encouraged to it from this word: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccles. 9:10. This I found in my heart to do. Am going to the grave very shortly (eternal

thanks to Jesus for a hope full of immortality) therefore set about this work. I was also excited to it from this command: "In the *morning* sow thy seed, and in the *evening* withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Eccles. 11:6. Hence, I was led to devote my early hours in the morning and those of the evening (being engaged in my worldly business through the day) to this work. May the merciful Lord pardon what is amiss in it—graciously accept it—and with power bless what is agreeable to his truth to your hearts.—I am,

Your affectionate servant in our precious Lord,

Nov. 1, 1784.

W. MASON.

JANUARY 1.

We see Jesus. Heb. 2:2.

Fine sights of human pomp and worldly grandeur captivate carnal minds, and delight natural senses. It is common to hear persons say in an ecstasy, O, I could sit all night to see a fine play! But one sight of the matchless charms, and dazzling glories of our Saviour, makes all things appear mean and contemptible. We turn our eyes from them, and say, I put away these childish things: I have an heavenly object, infinitely superior to such low, mean, perishing vanities. I know one, who, having heard that faithful minister of Christ, Mr. Whitefield, when he first preached in the fields, upwards of thirty years ago, on being asked which he liked best, to hear him preach, or see Vauxhall? profanely replied, "Whitefield only preaches of heaven, but Vauxhall is heaven itself." Poor soul! he was then blind to his want of Christ, and to his glory and excellency. But, to the praise of his rich grace, that poor sinner is out of hell, and can now happily join the faithful in saying, *We see Jesus*. So then, the once profane sinner is changed into the visionary enthusiast. Enthusiasm to see Jesus! "Enthusiastic this? then all are blind but rank enthusiasts:" for the essence of the gospel, the joy of sinners, and the cry of faith consist in this sight. What is life itself without it? For, alas! we have lost all righteousness, holiness, and happiness in ourselves; but we see all these, with heaven and glory, restored to us in Christ. O, blessed day! happy hour! joyful moment! when the sight of our inestimably precious Saviour first saluted the eyes of our mind, and became the object of our faith! It was the

beginning of days; yea, our birth-day to eternal blessedness. This sight is a feast to our souls all the year. We delight to begin the year with seeing Jesus. We salute one another with, "I wish you a happy new year." What mean we, but I wish you to see Jesus? What can make the year happy without this? This creates heaven in the soul. Then, it is a happy year, indeed. But without this precious view of faith, we can obtain no ease from the burden of sin; therefore, our souls must be miserable. This world can afford us no real happiness. The thoughts of death will torment us; and the view of judgment, fill us with dread and terror. But, O, happy sinners! who can bless God with Simeon, and say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" (Luke 2:30.) I see Christ: He is all *my* salvation, and all *my* desire. Ye heaven-born, high-favoured souls, well may ye say, time hasten on, years roll round, moments fly swiftly, and bring me to the full enjoyment of my beloved Saviour, in his kingdom of glory. For,

We see Jesus, who saw us, loved us, pitied and saved us, when dead in our sins, cursed by the law, and polluted in our blood. We look back and see him, an outcast babe—a despised *man*—crucified as a vile malefactor—bearing our sins on the cross—made a sacrifice for our souls, and redeeming us to God by his blood. We glory in him, as the only atonement for our sins, and our one righteousness to justify our souls: for he is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 23:6.) We look up, and see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, pleading our cause, and interceding for our persons at the right hand of God, and ever living to save us to the uttermost. We look forward to judgment; awful day! we see

'A trembling world and a devouring God.'

But, O! how bright the prospect shines! we see Jesus coming, with power and great glory, to receive us to his kingdom, that where he is, there we may be also.

Do we thus see Jesus, by faith, as revealed in the word of truth? Then, we are new creatures in him. We are called, with Moses, "to endure (every fight of affliction) seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:27.) We are exhorted to "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race set before us, *looking unto Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:1, 2.) Thus, we obey the will of God our Father, who commands us, "Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth, (Isa. 42:1.) "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17.

Jesus is the chiefest good,
He has sav'd us by his blood;
Let us value nought but him,
Nothing else deserves esteem.

Jesus, when stern justice said,
"Man his life has forfeited,
Vengeance follows by decree,"
Cried, "Inflict it all on me!"

Jesus gives us life and peace,
Faith, and love, and holiness:
Ev'ry blessing, great and small,
Jesus for us purchas'd all.

Jesus therefore let us own;
Jesus we'll exalt alone:

Jesus has our sins forgiv'n:
Jesus' blood has bought us heav'n.

JANUARY 2.

The nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. Jer. 4:2.

“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.” This is part of the new song, which is sung at the right hand of God, in honour and glory to the *Lamb*. (Rev. 5:9.) Shall we not honour and glorify him here below? What should be the employ of the redeemed and called, every day they live on earth, till they join their brethren in heaven? Why, to bless themselves *in* the Lord. Bless one’s self! Is not that boasting and vain glory? Yes, if it arises from any merit, self-righteousness, or excellence, which we fancy we possess. But we are to bless ourselves, because we are *in* the Lord, and blessed by our God and Father, with all spiritual blessings, in Christ Jesus. Though a sinner, a miserable sinner, yea, a law-accursed sinner in thyself, yet bless thyself, as a rich saint, a holy, happy soul in Christ; beloved of God, chosen of God, reconciled to God, at peace with God, an heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus. Bless thy soul, that is born again of the Spirit, to partake of such inestimable privileges. This is an evangelical duty. It raises the affections to the Lord of our salvation. It revives the heart. It fortifies the mind against sin, and invigorates the soul to all holy obedience. Therefore, it should be our daily work to bless ourselves, and to bless the Lord, for what he has done for us and in us. O, Holy Spirit! raise our legal spirits to the exercise of this gospel-practice! Cause our souls to delight more in, and to glory more of, the Lord our Righteousness. “In him shall they glory.” One view of

Christ by faith stains the pride of all human glorying. O, What glory shines in the person of Jesus! He is God and man in one Christ. What glory is displayed in his love to us sinners, in redeeming us to God by his blood, justifying us by his righteousness, living to pray for us as our advocate, and saving us day by day from sin, and everlastingly from hell to heaven! Let us constantly dwell upon, and glory in his person, his work, his offices, and his everlasting love below, till we come to cast down our crowns before him above.

For, while our souls are thus sweetly exercised from day to day, sin loses its dominion, Satan his power, the world its charms, self is denied, fears subside, hopes are lively, love reigns, our affections are above, our spirits are on the wing for God, and this is our constant language, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gal. 6:14.

“Ye who see the Father’s grace
Beaming in the Saviour’s face,
As to Canaan on ye move,
Praise and bless redeeming love.”

JANUARY 3.

Things that accompany salvation. Heb. 6:9.

Mary mistook Christ for the gardener. (John 20:15.) We are very apt to mistake our graces for our Saviour. Some put their faith in the place of Christ's righteousness. They say, we are justified by our faith, and not by the righteousness of Christ. Others call the graces of the covenant, the conditions of salvation. These are sad mistakes. Hereby the glory of Christ is eclipsed. The sinner's eye is turned from the Saviour to himself. His trust is placed on something wrought in him instead of Christ. He mistakes the things which accompany salvation, for salvation itself. What are the things which accompany salvation? Naturally, we have none of them. We have only the things which accompany damnation. We are no more able to work them in ourselves, than a dead corpse can raise itself to life, or a devil in hell change himself into an angel in heaven. They are the train of graces which ever attend the King of saints. The Saviour brings them, with himself, into the saved sinner's heart. They are the graces of his Spirit. (1st.) Faith in Jesus, as a redeeming, justifying, sanctifying Saviour. (2d.) Repentance towards God, as receiving and pardoning sinners in Christ: hatred of sin, and turning from sin to Christ. (3d.) Hope; which is an anchor of the soul, by keeping it steady in the expectation of what the word promises, and faith believes. (4th.) Love to God, excited by his love to us in Christ. (5th.) Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, (6th.) Joy in God, having now received the atonement by faith. (7th.) Heavenly-mindedness, by living on Jesus. (8th.) Deadness to sin, by the body of Christ. (9th.)

Deadness to the world, being crucified with Christ. (10th.)
Living to holiness, being alive unto God through Jesus Christ.
(11th.) Love to our brethren and fellow-sinners, being passed
from death to life. And, to all the rest, constant
dissatisfactions with ourselves, seeing we still are miserable
sinners, imperfect creatures, unprofitable servants. We look
on nothing within us as our title to glory, but wholly and
solely to Jesus. These graces we receive out of his fulness.
These are evidences of interest in him, make us meet for
heaven, and accompany salvation. For we have fellowship
with God, and his Son Jesus Christ. St. Paul was persuaded of
these things concerning his Christian brethren. See, then, the
glorious nature of Christianity. The faith of the gospel, and
the hope of salvation, are not empty notions. But "whom God
justified, them he also glorified." (Rom 8:30.) Those whom he
adorns with the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, he
makes glorious with the graces of his Spirit. What God hath
joined together, let no man put asunder. Matt. 19:6.

"Salvation, Lord, is thine,
And all thy saints confess,
The royal robes in which they shine,
Were wrought by sov'reign grace."

JANUARY 4.

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Isa. 66:2.

The Lord, whose throne is in the highest heaven, and whose footstool is the earth, here inquires after a place of residence and rest. As though about to quit his throne, he looks unto man. Behold, he tabernacles in man, he makes the human nature his temple. Hence, he looks to his brethren in flesh, however poor, miserable, and distressed. As his look of love is towards them, so he brings them to look for mercy from him. But we are all naturally too rich in our own eyes, to be indebted to his grace; too stubborn of spirit, to bow to his sceptre; and too stout-hearted, to hearken to his voice, and submit to his righteousness. Well, glory to the Lord! he has mercy for rebels, as well as a heaven for saints; yea, of sturdy rebels, he makes humble saints. How? Thus, "The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." (Isa. 2:12.) O! soul, dost thou see thy poverty, deeply involved in debt to law and justice, nothing but rags to cover thy nakedness, and liable to be cast into the prison of hell? Give glory to the Lord. The day of the Lord is upon thee, the light of truth has shined into thee; and, as though there was not another man upon the earth, the Lord looks to thee, even to thee, thou *poor sinner*. Thou sayest, I abhor myself; I tremble to look at myself—I am so poor, so miserable, so wretched! Surely, the Lord must turn away his eyes from me with loathing and abhorrence! No: to this man will I look, saith the Lord. Yes, saith the humble soul, If I had but a

contrite spirit, if I did but tremble at his word, I might think so, I should hope so: but I can see nothing in myself, why the Lord should look upon me, and love me. I tremble to be found in myself. O, if the Lord had not looked on thee as he did on Peter, thou wouldst never have had such a contrite spirit, nor such a trembling heart. Jesus beholds, and loves his image there. He was once a poor man as thou art. He had not where to recline his weary head, or to find comfort for his sorrowful soul, but in and from the loving breast of his dear Father. That is thy case. Instead of being a proud pharisee, why art thou a humbled sinner? Instead of making a mock at sin, why is thy heart broken for sin? Instead of despising the Lord's word, why dost thou tremble to be found out of Christ? All, all is because the Lord looks to thee. O look, look unto him and be saved from all thy doubts and fears! Thy poverty and contrition are not conditions, but blessed evidences of salvation. Our Lord assures us, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3.)

JANUARY 5.

In whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed, with that Holy Spirit of promise. Eph. 1:13.

Some consider this sealing as the highest assurance, which but few obtain; others, as a state of perfection in holiness, and an entire freedom from the being of sin. This some pretend to, but no one ever yet arrived to, in this life. But it is plain the apostle means nothing more, than what all believers in common are favoured with. Not after ye believed, but *in believing*, ye were sealed, says the learned Mr. Hervey. That is, as soon as ye received the truth in the love of it, ye were sealed by the Spirit, as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Consider, (1st,) what is implied in being sealed. A seal is to make an impression of its contents. Sealing an instrument, is making it valid, and acknowledging it as our act and deed. The heart of a believing sinner, melted by the Word and Spirit of God, is the subject of this sealing. The contents of this seal is, *Grace* and *Truth*, which came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17.) This is sealed upon the heart, by the act and deed of the Holy Spirit. This impress of salvation by the grace and truth of the Son of God, is made so deep and lasting on the believing heart, that time with all its changes, sin, with all its malignity, the world with all its charms and frowns, and Satan, with all his power and malice, can never, never efface. It will remain, as the impress of the seal on the wax. It answers to the revelation of Jesus made in the word, as the impressed wax to the seal. Such a sealed heart is God's jewel. He has distinguished it as his own. It will receive no other impression, but from the broad seal of heaven, salvation

by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God *only*. Now, is this sealed upon your heart? Do you reject with abhorrence every other hope? Do you believe in, look to, and trust Jesus for all your salvation? Rejoice: you are sealed. For, consider (2d.) *All* believers *are* sealed. 1. The sealer is the Spirit of promise. He is alike promised to all the believing members of Christ. They are heirs of promise. They have fled to Jesus for refuge, and laid hold of him as their hope: and nothing but consolation, yea, strong consolation, awaits them from the God of promise. 2. He is the Holy Spirit. By this sealing, he impresses the heart with the love of Christ, of truth, and of holiness. And, 3, He thereby fulfils our Lord's prayer for his members, "sanctify them through thy truth." (John 17:17.) Therefore, though in heaviness through manifold temptations, though in dejection from many enemies, let not go your confidence of faith. Think not yourself an unbeliever. Think not yourself under the curse of the law. Deny not the Spirit's work. For if you believe on Jesus, in your heart, you are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30.)

JANUARY 6.

Blessed is the man, to whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity.
Psalm 32:2.

When the Spirit bears witness to the believing heart, thou art this blessed man, O! what a heavenly transport of love, peace, and joy abounds! Every believer in Christ is this blessed man, though all do not enjoy the sense of this blessedness. The law may charge sin upon the conscience, Satan may bring many accusations, and the trembling sinner may reckon many iniquities against himself, and be ready to rate himself a cursed man, when the Lord imputes not a single iniquity to him, and pronounces him blessed. Sight often opposes truth; sense prevails against faith. Hence, the soul is in fear and distress. What can one do in such seasons? Believe against sense, hope against hope. Oppose God's declarations to nature's feeling. Mind, it is not said, blessed is the man who hath no iniquity, but unto whom the Lord imputeth none. Well, but if I see, and know, and feel, that I have iniquity, surely the Lord will impute it to me, and charge it to my account. What! after God hath charged sin to thy surety's account, reckoned with him for it, and received full satisfaction at his hands, will he charge it again to thee? No! God is just. He knows he imputed to, and laid upon his Son, the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:6.) God made Christ to be sin for us, that we might be righteous in him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) *In him*, O, blessed state! we stand righteous in Christ, are blessed in Christ. No iniquity is imputed to us; but the Lord imputeth righteousness without our works, (Rom. 4:6.) This is the blessedness of faith. Every believer in Jesus is thus

blessed. If the Lord impute no iniquity to him, who shall? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? O, believer! glory in thy blessedness, and give the Lord the glory of it! Nor sin, nor death, nor hell, shall rob thee of it in time, nor eternity. But if the Lord imputes no iniquity to thee, he hath also created a new spirit within thee, a spirit without guile, that is, upright with the Lord Jesus, that trusts in him, and cleaves to him *only*. Look at St. Paul: see the uprightness of his soul. He was like a chaste virgin to Christ. Imitate him. Propose what you would to him, but Christ; whether the pomps of the world, the pleasures of sin, the glory of self-righteousness, says he, away with it all; I renounce it all as dross and dung. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8.)

Tho' sin infects our ruin'd race,
And seals us under wrath;
Yet God imputes, thro' his rich grace,
Christ's righteousness and death.

Thus are we bless'd, alone thro' faith
Of Jesus crucify'd:
No sin will God impute, he saith,
To those for whom Christ died.

JANUARY 7.

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor. 1:22.

None but a sinner believing in Christ can say, God hath sealed me. But every believer in him may truly say so. This seemed very plain from a former meditation. Do all believers alike enjoy the comfort of this sealing? No: no more than any one believer, alike, at all times, enjoys the comfort of it. This is a certain truth, "by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1.) Though every believer is alike justified before God, and is at peace with him, yet every one has not the like sense of peace, nor any one, at all times. So it is of this blessed privilege of sealing. But if it is not considered and believed, that it may be alike enjoyed in common by all believers, many will rest short of the comfort of it. And, indeed, this is the case. How few believers are crying, Lord! give me the comfort of this sealing. In believing, we are sealed. In believing, we enjoy the comfort of it. But here is also another precious blessing of the Lord to his people—*The earnest of his Spirit*. This is also the privilege of all believers. Consider, what is an earnest? It is a pledge given in covenants and bargains, as a part, to insure the whole. This is common in things of this life. So, in salvation, God gives his Spirit as the earnest and pledge of our certain enjoyment, of all the glory and blessedness of heaven. This is according to covenant love and promise to sinners who believe in Christ. But, how is the Spirit an earnest of this? Mind, it is *in our hearts*. He brings our hearts to believe in, and to be in love with Christ—yea, brings Christ into our

hearts. He dwells there by faith. He bears witness of the Redeemer, and salvation by him, to our hearts. He takes of the things of Christ such as adoption by Christ, union to him, pardon of sin through his blood, justification in his righteousness, peace with God, and joy in God, through his mediation, and the hope of eternal life, through his intercession. He shews these unto us. Thus says the departing Saviour, "he shall glorify me." (John 16:14.) And thus he fills us with joy and peace in believing. He bears witness to our spirits, that salvation is sure in him to us. O, believer, see your inestimable privilege! Give the Lord the glory of it. Plead for the comfort of it. This will endear the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit to your hearts, cause you to look down with contempt on the world, to hate all sin, to love holiness, and to look up with longing delight and growing meetness for heaven and glory. And be assured, that, as truly as God gave his Son to die for your sins, and hath given his Spirit as an earnest in your hearts, eternal life also shall be yours by his free gift. (Rom. 6:23.)

JANUARY 8.

Ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30.

Who are thus sealed? every believer in Christ. This was shewed in the last meditation. This sealing, here and elsewhere, is spoken of as a thing done. Ye *are*, ye *were*, God *hath* sealed us. (2 Cor. 1:22.) If all believers are not sealed, it is absurd to exhort them: "grieve not the Spirit, whereby ye are sealed." Know, believer, that this is your inestimable privilege. Rejoice in it. Give the Lord the glory of it. O may the Spirit, the sealer, help us to make some improvement of it. (1st.) Are all believers sealed unto the day of redemption? then is their state safe, and their salvation sure. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. 2:19.) They shall be mine, saith the Lord, when I make up my jewels, etc. (Malachi 3:17.) It is horrid blasphemy to assert any soul may go to hell, whom the Spirit has sealed with the broad seal of heaven. (2d.) Are we thus sealed by the Spirit? then let our souls adore his eternal power and godhead, and praise him for his work in us. What power, short of omnipotent, could open our blind eyes, quicken our dead souls, subdue our rebellious wills, and bring our proud, self-righteous hearts, to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and to receive him for our whole salvation? Has the Spirit sealed us as the sons of God, and possessed our hearts with the peace of God, through faith in Christ? (3d.) Beware that you do not grieve the Spirit. Do we bear the impress of the Spirit's seal upon

our hearts? O ye sealed ones of God, be singular for God. Be exemplary in your lives before God. Consider, whose image and superscription you bear. Sink not below your dignity. Shun vanity fair. Avoid what gratifies the flesh. Flee the scenes of folly. Leave them to souls who know not the love of your Saviour. Live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. (4th.) Sealed believer, know that this sealing of the Spirit is the finishing grace of the covenant of love. Now "you are complete in Christ." (Col. 2:10.) Your title is clear to the heavenly inheritance. Live by faith upon the comfort of it. Reject all doubts and fears concerning it. Soon you shall possess it. Lay hold on eternal life. (1 Tim. 6:12.)

May the blest Spirit in my heart
Sweetly diffuse abroad
The love of God, th' incarnate God,
Who bought me with his blood.

O may I never once forget
What a poor worm I am:
From death and hell redeem'd by blood,
The blood of God's dear Lamb.

JANUARY 9.

Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.
Luke 23:42.

When Joseph had interpreted the chief butler's dream, how pathetically does he plead with him! Think of me, when it shall be well with thee. (Gen. 40:14.) But, alas! such is the base ingratitude of man, all was in vain. When restored to his dignity at court, he thought no more of poor Joseph in prison. Exalted stations often elevate the mind above feeling for the distressed. But it is not so with the King of kings. He is ever the friend of poor sinners. He remembers us in our low estate. Behold! for us he now hangs on the accursed tree, between two cursed sinners. One was taken, the other left. See your own state in both. Behold the marvellous power of the Lord's sovereign grace in one! Consider, (1st) Here is a reviler of Jesus changed into a petitioner to him. There was no alteration in any outward circumstances. All things continued just the same. Christ hung, to all appearance, as a mere man dying at his side. What, then, caused the change in him? O! hide your heads, and blush at your proud notions of your own free will, ye boasting pharisees!—fall down and adore distinguishing grace. One malefactor is left to his free will, and expires, blaspheming Jesus; the other dies, believing in him, and praying to him. He was snatched by grace from the gates of death and hell, as a brand which our Saviour would not suffer to be burned. Now, do you see your nature as wicked, and your state equally as desperate, as this thief's? then you will be humbled. Do you see that nothing but the same undeserved grace can save you? then, you will exalt the

free grace of Christ. (2d.) See the effects of it. He owns the justice of his sentence, reproves his free-will brother, and proclaims the innocence of the dying Saviour. O! fall down, and own that the sentence of the law, which curses you for sin, is just. Repel the pride and self-righteousness of your heart. Exalt the love and grace of our Saviour. (3d.) Hear his prayer. *Lord*, though thou diest as an ignominious man, yet thou art the Lord of life and glory. *Remember me*. There is no Saviour, but thee; no salvation, but by thee. I am a hopeless, helpless sinner: unless thou save me, I must be damned eternally. Thou art a King. Thou hast a kingdom. O, bring my soul into it! Now, have you just the same plea this thief had? Have you no other? Do you desire no better? Do you expect salvation from the same Saviour—on the same terms? Then, you are taught by the same Spirit, have the same faith in, and shall soon be in glory with the same Lord, who is rich in mercy unto all who call on him. (Rom. 10:12.)

“The dying thief rejoic’d to see
That fountain in his day;
And O may I, as vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.”

JANUARY 10.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. 1 John 4:2.

"You study too much, it will kill you," says one and another. What! the study of Christ, who is the life, health, and joy of the soul, kill one? Precious death, to die in such sweet exercise. It is only to fall asleep in Jesus, and awake with him in glory. I am sure, (through grace) this delightful study will kill the life of sense, the power of sin, and the delusion of Satan. Christ help us to study him more and more. The apostle here warns us against false spirits, which are not of God. He bids us believe not every spirit, but try them. For many false prophets are gone out under a spirit of delusion. We are in danger of being deceived by them. Here is a fixed rule to know whether they are of God or not. (1st.) *Know ye the Spirit of God.* Many pretend to have received him: to preach by his inspiration: to glory in ecstasies of comfort and revelations from the Spirit. Look at them with a godly jealousy. Be not hastily carried away by them. Do not condemn your own state, because you feel yourself a burdened sinner, groan under your burden, and though from day to day you are looking unto Jesus, yet have not these ecstasies and transports they pretend to. (2d.) Know the Spirit of God *hereby*, "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." This is the true testimony of the Spirit of God. Keep your eye steadily on this. What is implied in it? 1. That God and man in one Christ, is come to save us. 2. The end of his so coming was "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make

reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. 9:24.) Christ hath perfectly and everlastingly done all this in human flesh, for our souls. Therefore, (3d.) If the whole of this is not confessed, if any part of this is denied, then the "vision and prophecy is not allowed to be sealed up and finished." And if comforts and joys arise not from the firm belief of Christ's finished work for us, but from what we have done, or can do towards our own salvation, such comfort and joy flow not from the Spirit of God, but from another spirit the spirit of pride, delusion, and antichrist. For it is against confessing that Christ is the Alpha and Omega—the first and the last—the all in all of a sinner's salvation. O beware of that spirit, which bears witness of any thing in you for righteousness to justify you before God, or as the ground of your acceptance in his sight. Away with it all as filth and dung. Reject such spirit and his testimony. Know ye the Spirit of God beareth witness, because the Spirit is *Truth*. (1 John 5:6.)

JANUARY 11.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
Rom. 8:9.

This is one of the most awful truths in the Bible. He who hath not the Spirit of Christ, doth not know Christ, will not believe on him, cannot love him. Then that dreadful sentence stands out against him, and living and dying so, will certainly fall upon him. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maran-atha," that is, under the most dreadful curse, till the Lord come to execute the severest vengeance of it. (1 Cor. 16:22.) Jesus, Master, save us from this. Holy Spirit, rather let us be destitute of every blessing, than want love to Christ. O shed a Saviour's love abroad in our hearts, and that shall kindle ours. What is it to have the Spirit of Christ? How may we know that we have the Spirit of Christ? Consider, (1st.) the appellation here given, the Spirit of *Christ*. This will greatly help us to solve these questions. You may perceive what spirit a man is of, by his temper and conduct. The men of this world have the spirit of this world. Their walk and conduct show it. They set their affections on, seek all their happiness in, and expect all their comfort from the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. So it is with us all by nature. We have not the Spirit of Christ. But when the fulness of time comes, according to his covenant engagements with God the Father, and God the Son, God the Spirit is pleased to visit our souls. Then he opens our eyes, to see both our sin and misery, and to behold the righteousness and happiness there is in Christ. He enables us to believe in Christ, to savour the things of Christ, and to cry out, None but

Christ, none but Christ be my portion, in time and to eternity! Have we a sigh in our hearts after Christ, to be our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? This is of the Spirit of Christ. Do we groan under a body of sin and death, and cry out, O wretched that we are, who shall deliver us? Do we thank God for Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour, justifier, and deliverer? We have the Spirit of Christ. Can we come to a throne of grace, seeing ourselves miserable sinners, yet believing the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and the righteousness of Christ justifies from all condemnation, and therefore cry, God be merciful to me a sinner—Jesus save me or I perish? This is from the faith of Christ. This is the prayer of faith. The Spirit of Christ has inspired it. We have the Spirit of Christ. Do we delight to hear of Christ, to have fellowship with Christ, to live upon Christ, to walk with Christ, and to have the power of Christ's grace subduing the power of sin in our hearts, lips and lives? Verily we have the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (Gal. 5:17.)

JANUARY 12.

He answered and said unto them, my mother and my brethren are these, who hear the word of God and do it. Luke 8:21.

Looking at things which are not seen keeps the soul from fainting, and invigorates it to every holy duty. Do I believe Christ now thinks of me, and is this moment pleading my cause in heaven? how then can I live unholy, and walk uncomfortable on earth? True, if I did but know that Christ loved me. How do you expect to know it? Do you believe he loved his mother and his brethren after the flesh? It cannot be doubted. See then how near and dear to Christ, in a spiritual sense, are all who hear the word of God and do it. They hear Christ in their hearts, as truly as his virgin mother carried him in her womb. They are as verily allied to him by faith, are his brethren in spirit, as others were by blood. (1st.) To hear the word of God, implies to have such an understanding of it, faith in it, hope from it, and love to it, as to cause our souls to delight in God the speaker, and our affections to cleave unto him. (2d.) St. Paul speaks of tasting the good word of God. (Heb. 6:5.) There is a precious savour in the word. To hear it, is to have a spiritual relish for it. Just as food is savoury to the palate, so is the word of God to the soul. (3d.) The word testifies of the word: the letter of the word, of the spirit of the word: the written word, of the essential word, even the Lord Jesus. God speaks in the word of Christ, by Christ, and of himself in Christ. Therefore to hear the word of God, is to receive Christ into the heart by faith, to know the Father's love in him, and to expect full and final

salvation by him. (4th.) There is a still small voice, in which our beloved speaks internally, the words of his gospel. He says, "My sheep hear my voice." We know the voice of our Shepherd. It is the delight of our souls to hear him. Is this all? Do we only hear? Are the brethren and sisters of Christ all ear only? No, blessed be God, we are born again by the word of God. (1 Pet. 1:23.) Therefore we not only hear the Word of God, but do it. What is implied in this? that God's precepts are regarded by us, as well as his promises to us. The one, being fulfilled in us, causes the other to be dear to us. In one word, where there is a heart to hear the word of God, there is a desire to do the will of God. These are inseparable. Let us not deceive ourselves. "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another." (1 John 3:23.) "In believing we have everlasting life." (John 6:40.) "In loving we enjoy the comforts of it." (2 Cor. 6:6.) "In doing the will of God, we evidence that we are born of God." (1 John 2:17.) "O may the word of Christ dwell in us richly, in all wisdom," etc. (Col. 3:16.)

JANUARY 13.

When she was come to Solomon, she communed with him, of all that was in her heart. 1 Kings 10:2.

Behold a rare instance of sovereign grace. A king and queen met, to talk of the things of God! Human pomp and worldly grandeur, do not always shut the heart against the grace of God. Though "Not *many* wise men after the flesh, not *many* mighty, not *many* noble are called," (1 Cor. 1:25.) yet it pleases our Saviour to call some. He chooses one and another of the wise, mighty, and noble, to bow to his grace, honour his name, and shine as distinguished lights in the world. But in general, the gospel runs most and thrives best among the poor. "Hearken, my beloved, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" (James 2:5.) Here is a visit paid by a happy queen to a wise king. They were both wise and happy; for they were wise unto salvation. (1st.) See the cause of her visit. She heard of Solomon's fame concerning *the Name of the Lord*. This is the most noble of all fame; most blessed, when that is the first and chief spring of all our concerns. But, behold! greater than Solomon is here. The name of King Jesus is proclaimed all through the scriptures. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) Yet how few of rich and poor seek unto him? Awful! this royal queen, our Lord declares, shall rise up in judgment with, and condemn all such. (Matt. 7:42.) Most happy those who seek unto Jesus. (2d.) See the end of her visit—"To prove him with hard questions." Most probable, with intricate cases of conscience, which concerned the peace of her soul. Most happy, to have

free access to Jesus, to pour out our hearts before him, and to tell him of our doubts and sorrows. Not more free and open was Solomon's heart to hear and answer her hard question than the Friend of sinners is to all who come unto him. (3d.) She communed with him of *all* that was in her heart. O, it is well with, and well for us, to lay all open before our Lord, and to keep back no temptation, however vile, beastly, and devilish! He knows what is in us. He likes we should confess it unto him. (4th.) What was the effect of this visit? joy and rapture. "There was no more spirit in her." She was wrapt in ecstasy. She cries, "One half was not told me: it exceeds the fame which I heard!" One sight of Jesus by faith, one whisper from his loving heart, will cause this. O, let us more and more meditate upon the fame of Christ; and prove it from hour to hour, in looking to him, seeking him, calling on him, and living upon him, till we reign with him in heaven! Then, in the highest ecstasy, we shall say, not one half of thy glory, O Jesus! has been told us.

JANUARY 14.

The kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:12.

We say hunger will break through stone walls. Desperate circumstances make men violent. Thus is it with a convinced sinner. He sees himself in the city of destruction, and Moses has set his house on fire about his ears, as Mr. Bunyan says in his Pilgrim's Progress. Now, he cannot think of God, sin, death, judgment, heaven, and hell with indifference. No, he is awake. He sees the importance of them. His soul is alive. He feels the weight of them. He finds sin has destroyed him. The law terrifies him. Death stares him in the face. Judgment alarms him. He trembles to see hell moved from beneath to receive him. Now his fancied good works, his morality, etc. stand him in no stead. He hungers after righteousness. His apprehensions of wrath make him violent. His hunger is keen. He besieges the kingdom of God with eager prayer. He forces his way through every opposition. He breaks through every wall of obstruction, with, O give me Christ, or I perish. Give me his blood to pardon me, his righteousness to justify me, or I am damned for ever. This is fleeing for refuge. This is like one escaping for his life, from dreadful flames and devouring fire. This is being violent. Such take the kingdom of God by force. Though by grace we are brought into the kingdom of God, and enjoy pardon of sin and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; yet the Lord forbid that we should so lose our conviction of divine truths, as to have done with holy force and violence. Soldiers of Christ, to arms. What! think of laying down your weapons of defence, and folding your hands

to sleep on an enemy's ground, when all around are up in arms against you? Come, come, there is enough yet before you to alarm you, and to call up your violence. Sin is within you. Satan is plotting against you. The world would ensnare you. Death and judgment approach you. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." O, dream not over dry doctrines and empty speculations, so as to be proof against the force of these solemn events, and to lose your holy violence. "For seeing that all these things shall come to pass, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation, looking for the coming of the day of the Lord." (2 Pet. 3:11, 12.)

Let me ask the important question,
(Brethren, be not too secure)
What it is to be a Christian?
How we may our hearts assure?

Vain is all our best devotion,
If on false foundations built:
True religion's more than notion:
Something must be known and felt.

JANUARY 15.

Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever. Psalm 136:23.

O my soul, never, never forget these two things, thy Lord's *memory*, and his *mercy*. The one was towards thee from eternity: the other endures for ever. What hast thou to do in this little space of time, but to love, serve, and delight in thy mindful, ever merciful Lord? (1st.) Consider thy low estate. Never lose sight of that. Never forget it, lest thou grow vain in thy imagination, and unmindful of our Lord's love. At hell's dark door we lay. Lower we could not be, unless shut up in the bottomless pit. Most awful state! O tremble at the thought! dead in sin. A child of wrath by nature. Under the curse of the law, and the power of the devil. Blind to our danger. Insensible of our destruction. Not a desire to escape damnation. Nay, we sported ourselves with our own deceivings. Yet, (2d.) He remembered us. Who? Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father loved us from eternity, before we fell. He remembered and pitied us when fallen. The Son was mindful of us in eternity, and engaged to redeem us from our low estate. The Spirit, with equal love, seeing we could never rise, nor come out of the horrible pit into which we were fallen, undertook to quicken our dead souls, to come to Jesus for all the blessings of salvation. O what love and remembrance is here! Study it, O my soul, all thy days. A whole eternity will be swallowed up in wonder, love, and praise. (3d.) Mercy is the effect of his long remembrance. Why does God delight in mercy? Because God is love. Never look at your mercies, but remember they all flow from God's

love. Consider that precious word, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us," (mind great love is the cause of rich mercy. See when it abounded to us, and the effects of it) "even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved." (Eph. 2:4, 5.) Therefore, (4th.) "his mercy endureth for ever." Some talk of the mercy of God, without scriptural views of his love. Hence they make mercy to endure but for a few days or years to poor sinners, then it comes to an end, and they who were once the objects of mercy, become the subjects of God's curse or damnation. Thus they give the lie to the Spirit of truth. But his mercy endureth for ever, because the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, changes not. (5th.) Study to improve thy Lord's memory of thee, and his mercy to thee. Did he remember thy person in love, in thy low estate, and will he remember thy sins *no more*? (Heb. 8:12.) Then in thy lowest state of dejection remember him. Look to him, and call upon him, that thou mayest walk worthy of the Lord. (Col. 1:10.)

JANUARY 16.

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we believe, and therefore speak. 2 Cor. 4:13.

We should greatly admire these phrases, according as it is written—according to the scriptures. If our faith is not founded upon and agreeable to these, it is only a fanciful delusion. “The *same* spirit of faith.” With whom? St. Paul ever has his eye upon Christ. He refers to Psalm 116:10, where Christ speaks by the mouth of David. But what need had Christ of faith? never forget that he was *perfect man*, like unto us. As such, all the graces of the Spirit dwelt in him. *Faith*, in his Father’s promises; *hope*, in his love; *delight*, in his law; *zeal*, for his glory; holy fear and reverence of his name. You see the whole chain of graces in that word, “who in the days of his flesh, when he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death; and was heard in that he feared.” (Heb. 5:7.) Here is faith in the ability of God, hope in him, prayer to him, fear of him, etc. This is joyful to consider; there is not a grace in us, but what was in Christ our head, and flows to us from him. “The *Spirit* of faith.” It is a spiritual gift; it is a lively grace. It is not a dead notion in the head, but it brings the enjoyment of God into the heart. If we share in the graces of Christ on earth, we shall, surely, enjoy his kingdom in glory. See the genuine effects of faith. We believe, and therefore speak. Faith in the heart, opens the lips. We shall speak, (1st.) To God the Father, as to *our Father*, with the holy boldness and loving confidence of children. We shall

delight to draw near to him, to tell him of our sorrows, our enemies, our sins, etc., yea, of all that is in our hearts. "For like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm 103:13.) (2d.) For the glory of God, we shall speak of his everlasting, electing love, the freeness of his sovereign grace, and the riches of his abundant mercy, in giving his Son to be our Saviour. (3d.) We shall speak of his Son's redemption of us from all sin; the glory of his righteousness, in justifying us from all condemnation; and everlastingly saving us from sin to holiness, from hell to heaven. Lastly, we shall speak to the glory of the Spirit, for quickening our dead souls, and making us happy in the Father's love, and the Son's salvation. Such is the spirit of faith. Lord, help our unbelief! Lord, increase our faith!

When we pray, or when we sing,
Or read, or speak, or hear,
Or do any holy thing,
Be this our constant care:

With a fixt habitual faith,
Jesus Christ to keep in view,
Trusting wholly in his death
In all we ask or do.

JANUARY 17.

Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more?
Psalm 77:7.

St. Paul speaks of some who had cast off their first faith. What was the consequence? having damnation. (1 Tim. 5:12.) If the power and liveliness of faith abate in the heart, a sense of condemnation will be in the conscience. Hence, enlightened, sensible sinners call in question the Lord's love and grace towards them. They are prone to think, they have quite tired out his patience, and that nothing but wrath and misery await them. What shall we say to such? The Saviour himself speaks to them. Is it in wrath? Does he say, because you have forsaken me, I will cast you off for ever; die and be damned for your folly! I will show you no more favour? True, they have deserved this: they have reason to fear and expect this, was it not for the love of his heart and the grace of his word: therefore, they may joyfully sing,

The love divine, which made us thine,
Shall keep us thine for ever.

Therefore, love divine speaks. Grace is upon his lips. Let the children of fear and trembling hear. "*Remember from whence thou art fallen.*" Call to mind the loving days of thine espousal: then, thy heart glowed with love, and was fired with affections to *me!* I have never changed in my love to you, nor in my dealings with you: they were all in love. *Repent:* Change your mind, in regard to your hard thoughts of me, as though I would cast off for ever, and be favourable no more.

Change your conduct towards me: that ever you should prefer idols, vanities, (things of nought to me) and leave the enjoyment of my love to seek happiness in them. Cast off them; for I will never cast off you. Shew no favour to them; for I will shew all favour to you. *Do thy first works.* (Rev. 2:5.) Search my word: study my grace; dwell upon my love; meditate upon my sorrows, sufferings, and death for your salvation. Attend to the preaching of the gospel. Come to my table; come to me as a poor sinner, deceived by sin, and betrayed by folly; come to me for my promised grace, peace and rest, power and strength, to serve and obey me! O! may these gracious words from our all-gracious Lord, quicken the hope of our souls, to take up the prophet's words, in spite of sin, Satan, and unbelief, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, etc. (Hosea 6:1.)

The sinner who, by precious faith,
Has known his sins forgiv'n,
Is from that moment pass'd from death,
And seal'd an heir of heav'n.

Not as the world the Saviour gives;
He is no fickle friend:
Whom once he loves he never leaves.
But loves him to the end.

JANUARY 18.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good. Jer. 32:40.

A minister lately preaching on the tremendous solemnity of the last day, at the close of his sermon, thus addressed his hearers: "Most awful as my subject has been; most solemn as the things which you have heard have been—yet I have one thing more to add, which is as awful. 'Tis this.—Ere tomorrow's sun, perhaps, you will have forgotten all you have heard of this solemn subject!" Awful conclusion! is not this too much our case, respecting the covenant love and faithfulness of our God? Else, why those unreasonable doubts, groundless suspicions, heart-rending jealousies, and soul-dejecting fears which possess us? Else, whence that slowness of heart to approach the Lord, to cast our care upon him, put our trust in him, glory of him, live upon him, and rejoice in him? The Lord will ever be mindful of his covenant. (Psalm 111:5.) But, shame to us! we do not remember, as we ought, that we are the Lord's covenant people; that he has made an everlasting covenant with us, in Christ, our head and representative. He is the Mediator of this covenant. The moment we believe in Jesus, we have that *one heart* which is towards him, and we choose him as our *one way*. This the Lord promises in the former verse. Then, we enter on the everlasting covenant. This is said to be made with us; for the grace of it is applied, the blessings bestowed, and the promises of it made good to us. But here is a future prospect. The Lord gives one special promise, which includes every mercy, comfort, and blessing our souls can wish for.—*I will not turn away from them, to do*

them good. Lord! make us strong in faith, that we may give glory to thee, for this exceeding great and precious promise. Consider, (1st.) This and every other promise is in Christ Jesus. All the promises are in him. (2 Cor. 1:20.) (2d.) It is absolute and unconditional in regard to us: for Christ, our head, has fulfilled all the terms and conditions of the covenant for us. Hence, every blessing comes freely by him, and through him to us. Our every plea, for every promise and grace, is for Christ's sake. Most precious and most prevailing plea! A perfect atonement, and perfect righteousness, faith has to present and plead to divine justice. Therefore, let us come with boldness to a throne of grace. (3d.) Will God never turn away from us, to do us good? O, how should this endear him to our souls! how watchful, how careful ought we to be, not to turn away from him, to do evil! Lastly. We may bid defiance to sin, the world, Satan, death, and hell. For if the Lord will do good, what shall harm us? if God be for us, who shall be against us? if every good be thus promised, heaven, the chief of all good, is secure to us.

JANUARY 19.

The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matt. 10:30.

I never can understand this, says carnal reason. Therefore, reject it, says human pride. What didst thou ever gain, O Christian! by indulging carnal reasonings, or giving way to human pride? Verily, many a sad hour, many an uncomfortable frame. O, how happy doth simple faith make the heart! It receives every word which the Lord speaks, and draws comfort from it. It serves carnal reason and pride, as David did his ten concubines: he put them in a ward, and shut them up, to the day of their death. (2 Sam. 20:3.) For verily, they are like the spies which Moses sent out, "who brought up an evil report of the land." (Numb. 13:32.) Therefore, listen not to their suggestions. Our Lord never spoke a word as a subject for thy curious speculations; but, that thou shouldst humbly believe it, exercise thy believing mind upon it, and derive peace and comfort from it. Our Lord had been telling his disciples some things, which were very disagreeable to flesh and blood: that they were as sheep among wolves—would be hated of all men for his name's sake, and persecuted. Yet, says he, fear not them, who can only kill the body: they cannot touch the soul. But what disciple is there, who is not subject to fear the wrath of man? Fear of being hurt, is natural to us all. What can deliver a man from, and set him above this fear? Nothing but the power of faith. Here is the Lord's word. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Now, you are brought to the suburbs of comfort. Believe, and enter into it. If every, the most minute excrescence of my body, lies open to my heavenly Father's

eye; if not one of them fall to the ground, without His permission—then, carnal reason, avaunt! fears, be gone. Men and devils, do your worst. My loving Father stands between your wrath and my soul. I am safe, while Omnipotence lives, and everlasting love changes not. Ah! but, when I think of the hairs of my head, I think of my sins. If the former are numbered, the latter are recorded; and they are more in number than the very hairs of my head; therefore, my heart faileth (Psalm 40:12.) Then, let sense and reason be subject to faith. Hear and rejoice at what thy Lord saith: "I *have* blotted out, as a *thick cloud*, thy transgressions; and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. 44:22.)

Still will, my God I leave my cause,
And trust his promised grace:
He rules me, by his well known laws
Of love and righteousness.

Not all the pains that e'er I bore,
Shall spoil my future peace;
For death and hell can do no more,
Than what my Father please!

JANUARY 20.

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions; and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. Isa. 44:22.

Thus, of miserable sinners, God makes happy saints. Here is the work of each divine person in the ever glorious Trinity. God the Father blots out sins in the court of heaven: God the Son by his atonement on the cross; and God the Spirit, in the court of a sinner's conscience. Believe, and enjoy the comfort of this. Now, may the God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing this, and make us to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 15:13.) When the dear women came unto the sepulchre, to see our Lord, they said, who shall roll away the stone from the door? (Mark 16:3.) But behold, it was done. So a poor, broken-hearted sinner says, This thick, black, impenetrable cloud of my sins intercepts between my soul and the light of God's countenance: it prevents the comforting rays of the Sun of righteousness from shining into my soul. O! who can disperse it? None but God. Behold, he hath done it. And He assures us of it. Look within, and be humble: look up, and be joyful. Did you think a storm of divine wrath and terrible vengeance was gathering over your guilty head? Behold! love speaks, mercy proclaims, grace declares, I have dispersed the cloud; I have blotted out thy sins. Grace superabounds over all the aboundings of sin. A deluge of pardoning love, mercy, and grace, washes away all thy transgressions. They are all dispersed like a cloud, driven away by the wind. What! all this rich love, mercy, and grace, to such a hell-deserving sinner as I am? and that too, without

any terms and conditions, requisites, and deserts of mine! Yes! all is of rich love, free grace, and sovereign mercy. But behold the end of this. It is, to attach thy heart to a sin-pardoning God. O, my soul, return from thy backsliding ways, thy unbelieving thoughts, thy jealousies, and suspicions of thy Lord's love, unto him! For "I have redeemed thee." Look on thy sins. See thyself redeemed from them, by blood divine. Look to heaven. See it purchased for thee, and secured by thy Redeemer's righteousness. Now glory of, and live like a son of God, and a joint heir with Christ. O, may his blood make all serene within! May that purge our conscience from all dead works to serve the living God. (Heb. 9:14.)

Redeeming grace, forgiving love,
'Tis a most glorious theme!
It fills us with the joys above,
God's glory to proclaim.

Thy Savior calls; my soul, return,
To taste his pard'ng love:
This makes thy frozen heart to burn,
While praise ascends above.

JANUARY 21.

Is not this the carpenter's son? Matt. 13:55.

"Such indignity I cannot bear; such insult is intolerable." Ah! who? What art thou who speakest thus? Thou sinful dust—thou proud worm of earth, look unto Jesus! See the King of kings; the Son of God, in the form of a mean man, the son of a carpenter!—yea more, himself a carpenter, the Son of Mary! (Mark 6:3.) Mark his condescension; learn humility. Behold his treatment and contempt; learn patience and submission. Astonishing mystery! Let reason bow and faith adore. Sinners, behold with joy and wonder, thy God in flesh. Born under that curse for sin, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," (Gen. 3:19.) he works at a common trade, and follows an ordinary occupation. O! ye great and mighty, who are above trade, and despise those who follow it, saved ye must be by this carpenter's son, or perish everlastingly! He is the one and only object of hope and salvation. "He is God and man in one Christ. One, not by conversion of the godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God." Well might Isaiah style him *wonderful*, chap. 9:6. He is so, both as God and as man: and as God and man in one Christ; wonderful in love, sufferings, and power, to save sinners. Wonderful in his humility; for he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant. The Jews were "astonished *at* him, and said, whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" Yet they were offended *in* him, because of the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education. Exceedingly foolish! So is judging of Christ by sight and sense. But he says, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended *in* me." (Matt. 6:6.) It is the

blessed nature and peculiar office of faith, to pierce through the mean appearance of the humanity, and to see the godhead of Christ. Here is the sure evidence of vocation. "Though Christ is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; yet to them who are *called*, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:24.) Now do you see the salvation finished by the power, and according to the wisdom of God, by this carpenter's son? Mean and contemptible as he appeared in the eyes of others, do you see such matchless beauty, such divine glory shine in his person and works, as to say, "My Lord and my God?" O! beware of looking on this as a common call. Know, it is of special, peculiar, distinguishing grace: give glory to the Holy Spirit for it. Rejoice at the meanness of thy Lord; love him for it: all was for thy salvation. Rejoice in him: though to the eye of sense, mean and contemptible, yet he is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25.)

JANUARY 22.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. 1 John 3:6.

Beware, O my soul! of licentious spirits, who make Christ a minister of sin, instead of a Saviour from *all* sin. For such are strangers to the sweet experience of abiding in Christ, whereby sin is dethroned in the heart, the power of it subdued in the life, and holiness maintained in the soul. To abide in Christ, is to continue to believe in, and rest upon him, as the dwelling of our souls. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." (Psalm 90:1.) This is the claim and confession of the faithful. Ask a believer, "where dwellest thou? he will reply, on my own freehold, my Father's patrimony, where my treasure is—*IN Christ*. Such an one sinneth not. What! never sin in thought, word, or deed? has he no sin in him? This state is the earnest desire of his soul. Verily, he doth not abide in Christ, who doth not long for it; but so far from being in it, that every believer feels he is a lump of sin; knows that nothing but sin dwells in his flesh; finds, if left to himself, he can do nothing but sin. Yet he sinneth not. (1st.) He abides in the truth. He cannot so sin, as to lie against the truth, and say, "I have no sin." (2d.) So as to reject the record of truth, that eternal life is in Christ, and make the God of truth a liar. For he believes, that free remission of sin, and full justification unto eternal life, is by the blood and righteousness of Christ *only*. (3d.) As a new creature in Christ, he sinneth not. He lives above the power of sin, hates all sin, walks contrary to sin, and strives against every sin. (4th.) He sinneth not, as under the law of works; for he is under the grace of Christ. Though sin lives and rages

in his flesh, yet he lives not in sin. He is dead to sin; sin reigns not over him. Of every evil, (let who will abuse it, at the peril of his soul) he may say with St. Paul, "It is no more I who do it, but sin which dwelleth in me." (Rom. 7:17.) (5th.) He sinneth not, as the ungodly do, or as he himself did while unregenerate. Then, the whole man, spirit, soul, and body loved sin, wilfully and habitually committed sin, with enmity against God; but now, the least sin is his grief; the very motions of sin, his distress. Lastly, He sinneth not, to the damnation of his soul. For there is (not one) condemnation against him, as he is in Christ Jesus. And he is kept by the power of God unto salvation. O, precious abiding faith! Victory over every enemy is sure. "For we are more than conquerors, through Christ who loved us." (Rom. 8:37.)

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel-armour on;
March to the gates of endless joy,
Where thy great Captain Saviour's gone.

What though thine inward lust rebel?
'Tis but a struggling gasp for life;
The weapons of victorious grace
Shall slay thy sins, and end the strife.

JANUARY 23.

Thou shalt swear, the LORD liveth. Jer. 4:2.

A rebel under an attainder, a malefactor under sentence of death, cannot be sworn to give evidence in any court. Such is thy case, O sinner! Thou art naturally under an attainder, as a rebel against the King of kings; and art under sentence of death, by the law of God. But if an earthly monarch, by a royal act of sovereign mercy, forgives a rebel, and pardons a malefactor, they are then good evidences in court. So it is with thee, O believer! thy attainder is taken off, thy pardon is passed under the broad seal of heaven, by a sovereign act of thy gracious Lord: but never forget the love of Jesus, who obtained this for thee. Well, now thy Lord challenges thee: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." (Isa. 43:10.) He subpoenas us into court. He commands us, *ye shall swear*. The Lord, in our days of ignorance, got great dishonour from us, by our taking his holy and sacred name in vain. If not by profane oaths and horrid imprecations, (which, alas! few have been free from) yet in many other ways. Now, we are pardoned by him, and returned to him, he will get honour and glory from us. Swearing an oath is, (1st,) for the confirmation of the truth: (2d,) to put an end to all strife. (Heb. 6:16.) Christian, attend to the form of thy oath: thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth. Can you swear this in truth, from your own knowledge. Hearsay evidence cannot be admitted in any court. O! but if thy heart be quickened, and turned to the Lord; if thou believest in the Son of God—verily, thou canst give sure evidence that the Lord liveth! The Lord Jesus liveth in thee by faith. Thou hast fellowship with him who saith, "I

am he who liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of hell." (Rev. 1:18.) Solemnly attest, and steadily persist in this truth, in the presence of angels and men. Confirm it by thy solemn oath, before the Judge of all; so shall it put an end to all strife in thy own conscience. As surety as the Lord hath quickened thy spirit, he liveth to save thy soul to the uttermost. Honour thy Lord, by thy sacred testimony to his life, and life-giving influence. Record thy solemn oath to thy Lord, in the court of conscience. Produce it against the false accusations, and lying evidence of Satan. Fulfil thy Lord's word: "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. 45:24.)

Lamb of God, in thee we trust,
On thy fixt love depend:
Thou art faithful, true, and just,
And lovest to the end.

Heav'n and earth shall pass away,
But thy word shall firm abide:
That's thy children's stedfast stay,
When all things fail beside.

JANUARY 24.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Isaiah 40:1.

(1st.) Who are the people of God? "I am of that number," saith one; "for I feel my heart is full of comfort, as ever it can hold." It may be so. Then, this text is not for thee. But it will do thee no harm to examine into the nature of thy comforts, the tendency of them, and how thou contest by them. Saith another, "I am sure I cannot think myself one of the people of God." Why not? "Because, instead of the comforts of God's children, I have continual sorrows and conflicts, am oppressed by Satan, harassed with temptations, groan under a body of sin and death, and dread, after all, that I shall perish in my sins, through unbelief. Thou art the very person, one of the happy number of the Lord's people, of whom he here speaks. He describes his people as poor and afflicted, who trusted in his name. (Zeph. 3:12.) What is his holy and blessed will concerning you? Why, (2d.) That you should be comforted. He knows your sorrows, He sees you want comfort. He, therefore, commands it to be administered unto you. This is a commission, peculiarly directed to the Lord's ministers. I am not honoured with that high calling; yet the Lord may graciously condescend to administer comfort, by means of so weak and mean an instrument as I. For St. Paul says to private Christians, "Comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:18.) Therefore, it is our duty. The Lord succeed us in it! Mind then, thou poor sorrowful sinner, who art afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted: behold, thy Lord is mindful of thee. Take notice of the love of his heart;

the sounding of his bowels over thee; and the vehemence with which he speaks concerning thee—*Comfort, comfort*. Thou hast sorrow upon sorrow in thyself. Here is comfort upon comfort from thy Lord. He is the God of all comforts. He would have thy soul to be comforted. Nay, look not within to find any cause why thy Lord should have such love to thee, or concern for thee. The cause lies in his own loving heart. He freely gave his Son for thee; he freely promises his Spirit to thee; he commands comforts, comforts to be spoken to thee. Now, wilt thou go and indulge thy besetting sin of unbelief, and say, after all this, "My Lord careth not for me; he hath forgotten to be gracious unto me?" O! rather bring that bosom-sin of unbelief to thy Lord. Beg of him to slay its power, that it dishonour him no more by disbelieving his precious word. For he saith, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." (Isa. 49:15.)

JANUARY 25.

O, death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? 1 Cor. 15:55.

Says a celebrated poet, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." True, there is a natural philosophy in us so to think; but new-born souls, not only know they are mortal, dying creatures, but, in the exercise of grace, they can indulge the thoughts of death with pleasing reflections. For death is not only a conquered enemy by the Captain of our salvation; but he is also enumerated in the catalogue of our blessings.—"Death is yours." Yours, to deliver you from all your evils of sin, sorrow, and temptations; yours, to introduce you into the presence of your God and Saviour, and into the enjoyment of all the glory and blessedness of his kingdom. But death has a sting, and the grave a victory: this sting is sin. And what gives strength to sin, and victory over the sinner, is, the law. That darts the sting into us, and so fixes it in us, that, for any thing that we can do, we must feel its poisoned sting to all eternity. But, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" He answers, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." (Isa. 63:1.) It is that glorious Warrior! our almighty Conqueror, Jesus! who has disarmed death of his sting, and obtained a complete victory over the grave. Do you ask, What is this to us? Why, truly, we can draw no comfort from it, unless we believe in him, and look upon his victories as obtained for us. Thus, viewing our triumphant, risen, ascended Saviour, we shall be enabled, in the confidence of

faith, to say, "O, death! where is thy sting?" thou hast lost it in the flesh of Christ; by his death, he has deprived thee of it. "Through death, he hath destroyed him who had the power of death—that is, the devil: and delivers them who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage." (Heb. 2:14, 15.) Art thou in bondage, through fear? Who holds thee under it? thy worst enemy, the devil. By what means? unbelief: because thou dost not believe thy best Friend, thy dear Redeemer. Dost thou say, I would believe, but cannot? What! canst thou not believe thy Lord? He says to all thy questioning doubts, "*I speak in righteousness.*"—I have wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, to clothe your naked soul, and to make you stand before the throne of God perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Believe this, and triumph over sin and death. "*Mighty to save!*" Can the power of sin, death, and hell withstand my might? look unto me, and be saved from thy bondage and fear. Receive his word; rejoice in the comfort of it. Christ hath fulfilled it, "O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. 13:14.)

JANUARY 26.

Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Psalm. 77:8.

It is one thing for God to desert, and another to disinherit. The former he frequently does by his children; the latter he never did to any one of them. He may change in his conduct to them, but never in his love for them. That is a sweet expostulation of the Lord's, "How shall I give thee up Ephraim?" (Hos. 11:8.) It reminds us of the tender affection of a loving father to a disobedient son, with a pen in his hand, just going to execute a deed to disinherit him. But love pleads: his fatherly bowels yearn; his heart melts. Though he is disobedient, yet he is *my child, my heir, the son of my loins*; I cannot give him up; I cannot cut him off; I will not do it! The love of God to his children infinitely exceeds that of the most tender parent. He allows there may be such monsters in nature, for a mother not to have compassion on the son of her womb. But, says the Lord, "I will never forget thee." (Isa. 49:15.) "For, he will rest, or be silent in his love." (Zeph. 3:17.) Though thou dost not hear the voice of comfort, and the melody of joy, yet his love is the same. He cannot change. "*God is love.*" (1 John 4:8.) Nothing but love to his people in Christ: therefore it is impossible for his mercy to be clean gone, or his promise ever to fail. It was of his rich mercy and great love, that he quickened us, when dead in sins. (Eph. 2:4.) Therefore, we cannot perish for want of mercy. "God's promises are all in Christ Jesus, Yea and Amen, to his own glory." (2 Cor. 1:20.) Therefore, God would lose the glory of his truth, if one of them should fail. O! why then

should any distressed sinner thus question his mercy and his promise? Take shame to thyself. Say with the Psalmist, "It is my infirmity." No marvel, if, under infirmities, you call in question the mercy and truth of a faithful, covenant God; that you should question your own state, and think you are not a vessel of mercy, and that not one promise is for you. But your very questioning, fears, and concerns shew it. The dead in sin look not for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life. Unregenerate souls see nothing of the exceeding great and precious promises, which are in Christ Jesus: they have no concern about it. O, therefore, instead of questioning God's mercy, plead it! Own this as thy sin, to doubt it. Instead of doubting his promises, look at them; glory in them; give God the glory of them. Stagger not at the promise, through unbelief. "Be strong in faith, and give glory to God." (Rom. 4:20.)

JANUARY 27.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 1 Cor. 15:19.

Here is a supposition, and a consequence drawn from it. Consider, (1st.) This hope in Christ. It is not common to all men. It is a precious grace of the Holy Spirit. It springs from faith in Christ. It looks to the promises in Christ, and is nourished and supported by them. It is *a lively hope*. We are "begotten again to it, according to the abundant mercy of God our Father, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3.) By it, we are made to differ from all other men, who, though they may talk of hope in God, yet have no hope; but are without Christ, and without God in the world. (Eph. 2:12.) Here is the proof of it: "Every man who hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) Mind—Christ is the object of this hope. It is *in*, or *on* Christ. The man who is the subject of it, purifies himself. How? By the blood of Christ, and by the grace of Christ. From what?—From all sin: from the love of this world; from the pomps and vanities of it. He lives not in them; he walks not after them; he hates them; he despises them. Hope on Christ springs up in his heart: that kills the love of the world in him. (2d.) What is it to have hope in this life *only*? have our prospect hounded by the narrow limits of time and sense; to take up with the joys and pleasures of the present world; to set our affections on them, and seek all our happiness in them, without looking after and longing for the invisible glories of a better world. (3d.) Why then are we of all men the most miserable? (1st.) Because we are new creatures in Christ; we have a new and

spiritual nature in and from him; we have communion and fellowship with him: therefore, we cannot enjoy the pleasures, honours, and riches of the world, as other men do. We are "crucified to the world." (Gal. 6:14.) (2d.) We are miserable from the malice, hatred, and persecution of the men of the world, for our hope in Christ. (3d.) We are miserable from the burden of a body of sin, which others feel not; from the fiery darts of Satan, which at others he shoots not; the workings of unbelief, which others find not; that we ever offend the Lord, which others care not for; that we cannot perfectly and perseveringly obey his will in all things, which others concern not themselves about; that ever the Lord hides his face, and deserts our souls, which others know nothing of. From these, and innumerable other things,—Christians, of all other men, are most miserable. But, O blessed hope in Christ! "He is our hope." (1 Tim. 1:1.) While Jesus lives, our hope lives. Time, with all its changes, cannot frustrate it; death, with all its terrors, cannot destroy it; eternity, with all its glories, will be the end and fruition of it.

JANUARY 28.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ungodliness and unrighteousness by men. Rom. 1:18.

One sin ruined the whole race of Adam. It brought curse and wrath upon every soul of man. Every man that ever lived, that now lives, and that ever shall live upon this earth, is by nature a child of wrath; and the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against his sin, not one soul excepted. How is this wrath revealed? (1st.) At the giving the holy law on Mount Sinai. (Exod. 19.) There the Lord revealed all the terror and glory of his majesty, as the most holy, sin-hating God. O think of the mount that burned with fire! the blackness, darkness, and tempest!—the awful sound of the trumpet!—the terrible voice of words, which they who heard, entreated they should not be spoken any more. And so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12:21.) O! think of this; and think not what is called the least sin, a little thing: for it has lighted up the fire of God's wrath. (2d.) See the wrath of God revealed, in drowning the old world, in burning Sodom and Gomorrah, in the matter of Korah, and in his judgments upon the ungodly in all ages. "God is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalm 7:11.) The fire of his wrath and indignation ever smokes against all sin. Remember this, and be watchful. (3d.) Reflect on the wrath of God, revealed from heaven, when he took vengeance on his beloved Son, for the sins of his people. See our iniquity-bearing, sin-atoning, curse-sustaining Lamb of God on the cross. There see what sin is. There view the indignation of God against, it, his justice punishing it, and the awful

vengeance he executed upon it. O my soul, think of thy Saviour's inconceivable sufferings for sin. Here see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. View its crimson dye, in the purple gore of the Son of God. Ever think of this; love the Lamb, and strive against all sin. For, (4th.) The wrath of God is revealed against sin, even in his own children. He equally hates their sins, will punish sin in them, and them for sin too. Beware of any doctrine that makes light of sin; or, as though God has not the same abhorrence of sin, indignation and wrath against sin, in his own children, as well as others. Do not hold the truth in unrighteousness. Never think of reconciling a holy God to abominable sin. (5th.) The wrath of God is revealed in the conscience of his people. By the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:20.) And the law worked wrath. (chap. 4:15.) It fills the mind with terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God, and a fearful looking for of his judgment, and fiery indignation against sin. Bless Jesus, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. And, lastly, remember the awful day when "God will take vengeance on them who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ."

JANUARY 29.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.
Lam. 3:40.

This book is justly styled, *the Lamentations*. The dear children of God were now in captivity and deep distress. Jeremiah most pathetically enumerates and laments their great calamities. We shall never get out of this book of Lamentations, while in the body. We daily see cause for lamentation, on one account and another: and, indeed, if we did not, it would be a bad sign, that, our eyes were blinded by self-righteous pride, or our hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing," is the Christian's motto. Times of calamity, and seasons of distress, call for self-examination and soul-searching. This will keep down murmurings and complaints. (1st.) Let us *search*, look for, and enquire after something that may support and comfort us, and teach us to improve our distress. Soul, let thy circumstances be what they may, thy Lord's advice is ever reasonable. Search the Scriptures. Why? They testify of *me*. (John 5:39.) Christ is the head of the covenant: in him the Father loves us; through him, his love flows to us. Afflictions flow from covenant love, and shall answer covenant purposes. The Scriptures are written for our comfort. There we find, that we have the common lot and inheritance of all saints. (2d.) *Try our ways*, by that standard of justice and perfection, the law of God. O, how will this make the sense of sin abound in our eyes! Is the law of God *holy*? our ways are unholy. Is the law *spiritual*? we are carnal, sold under sin. Is the law *just*? our ways are unjust. Is the law *good*? in us, that is, in our

flesh, dwells no good. What must we do? Must we sit down in melancholy, give up all hope, and write despair upon our hearts? No, blessed be God! Though sin has destroyed us, there is salvation in the Lord for us. (3d.) *Turn again to the Lord.* Such is the acting of a gracious heart. Having once tasted that the Lord is gracious, and known the precious love of Christ, it cannot be happy in sin. It cannot bear to live at a distance from the Lord, its life and love. Believing that all our iniquities were laid upon Christ; that he bore them in his own body on the tree,—it cannot rest till it again finds pardon in his blood, the peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Bless the Lord, O my soul! for that gracious word, “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” (Jer. 3:22.)

Sin and the pow'rs of hell
Persuade me to despair:
Lord, make me know thy cov'nant will,
That I may 'scape their snare.

Remember all thy grace,
And lead me in thy truth
Forgive the sins of riper years,
And follies of my youth.

JANUARY 30.

Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3:24.

Who are in this happy state? Men, apostate men! who have alike "sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But are impenitent and unbelieving sinners justified? Who will dare assert this? St. Paul fully contradicts it. He expressly says, the righteousness of God, (that one righteousness which God appoints, accepts and approves) which is by faith of Jesus Christ, (received by that faith, which Jesus is the author and finisher of, Heb. 12:2.) is unto all, and upon all *them who believe*. But unbelievers reject this glorious righteousness of Christ. Therefore, they are not in a state of justification. Doubtless, God hath it in his secret and eternal purposes, to justify all them who shall believe: therefore, he gives them faith in time. Then, what was eternally decreed, effectually takes place in their souls: then, they come as condemned malefactors, to plead this act of free grace at the bar of justice, at the footstool of mercy; and, from the ground of their hearts, give God the glory of it. For God is just, while he is the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. O, happy believer in Jesus! Thou, even thou, though in thyself a miserable sinner, yet art freely justified. Thou art as fully freed from all condemnation for sin, as though thou hadst never committed a sin. Thou art as perfectly righteous before God, as if thou hadst never sinned: infinitely more so, than if Adam had never fallen, and thou hadst been born an innocent creature. For thou art arrayed in the glorious righteousness of the Jehovah Man, Christ Jesus. Why art thou not always happy

and joyful in this? Pride is thy nature: that says, It cannot be—I must have some hand in procuring it. Legality works in you: that says, I must perform some condition to obtain it. Unbelief sets itself against it, and says, It is impossible it should be true. All the evil that is in your fallen nature opposes free and full justification by the grace of God. It is your grand business to oppose the truth of God against all, and to believe in opposition to all. Fix, O fix your constant eye on the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! Free grace sets that before you. Glory only and alone in this: for by this thou art delivered from captivity to sin, Satan and the law, and hast a full and everlasting title to heaven. All grace and glory comes from free grace, through this. O! be strong in faith, and give Jesus the glory of this. And while you look at and glory in your blessed privileges, be careful of your walk. Consider how highly thou art favoured of God, and how thou oughtest in all things to study to please God, and ever fear to offend him: for “God is *love*.” 1 John 4:8.

JANUARY 31.

This is our God for ever, and ever: he will be our guide even unto death. Psalm 48:14.

Here is, (1st.) The joyful claim of faith. *This* God: Just as though the sinner saw him as visible, pointed to him, and exulted in him. "Is our God." It is our special mercy, we do not serve an unknown God. Our God has manifested himself to us: is known by us: we have felt his sovereign grace and almighty power within us. Hence, we own him, come to him, and rejoice in him, as our covenant God in Christ. He came from heaven to earth, to seek and to save us. He has given us hearts to ascend from earth to heaven. There we view our reconciled God and Father, at perfect peace with us; our God Redeemer, ever living to save us; our God and Comforter, winging the joys of salvation into our hearts, and thereby sanctifying us unto eternal glory. "This our God, ever rests in his love to us." (Zeph. 3:17.) "He will never turn away from us to do us good." (Jer. 32:40.) For, (2d.) He is "our God forever and ever." Not only yesterday and to-day, while our frames are warm and lively, and our comforts are strong: but through every revolving period of time, and in every distressing circumstance. O, distressing thought, if God were ever to cease to be our God! Some say, God may be our loving God and Father today, but to-morrow may cast us off in his wrath, and become our implacable enemy for ever. What! does God beget children for the devil? Has Christ redeemed souls by his blood, which may be damned in hell? Does the Spirit quicken and sanctify souls, who may inhabit the bottomless pit? O! this is not the language of Scripture and faith, but of

ignorance and unbelief. It comes from devilish pride, thinking we do something to cause God to be our God. It tends to dreadful presumption—thinking we can do something to keep him our God. It ends in awful desperation; for if we fail on our parts, we lose God and our souls for ever. No: but, (3d.) O joyful truth! “Our God will be our guide, even unto death.” Then, we cannot sin our souls out of his hands. “For Christ’s blood cleanseth from all sin.” (1 John 1:7.) “We cannot forfeit his mercy; it endureth for ever.” (Psalm 106:1.) “He will guide us into all truth.” (John 16:13.) His truth forbids all sin: everlasting love constrains from it: his promises excite to all holiness; and we are filled with all joy and peace in believing him, when he says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Heb. 13:5.

The God we worship now,
Will guide us till we die;
Will be our God while here below,
And ours above the skies.

FEBRUARY 1.

And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his own place. Gen. 18:33.

Love is the bond of friendship. Unless love be mutual, friendship cannot subsist. The sweets of friendship are enjoyed in free communications. Friends are delighted with each other's presence. Long absence causes pain. This is true between God and the soul. If you feel concern at the absence of God, you love God: you are a friend of the Lord's. The Lord stoops to earth: He takes our flesh: He visits and converses with us as friends. This same Lord communes with Abraham. Consider, (1st.) Abraham was a poor sinner, as we are; he could no more behold the essential glory of the Godhead, without a mediator, than we can. Nor can God in his essential glory, as perfectly holy and righteous, draw near to fallen man, without a mediator, but sudden destruction must be his awful doom. Therefore it was Jesus the Lord, the sinner's friend, mediator, justifier and Saviour, that communed with Abraham. It is Jesus "with whom we have to do." "He is the word of God to us," (Heb. 4:13.) This revives and refreshes our dejected spirits. (2d.) Though this visit and communion with the Lord was precious, yet it did not last long. *The Lord went on his way.* Do not you frequently find it so? Christ comes and pays a love-visit to your soul. He sweetly communes with you. He warms your heart. He comforts your soul. It is but for a season. He goes his way. You cannot but be sorry. You reckon those moments tedious that intervene between one loving visit and another. You say, with the

disciples, "did not my heart burn within me?" (Luke 24:32.) And with others, "O thou hope of Israel, the Saviour, why shouldst thou be a wayfaring man, who carries but a night?" (Jer. 14:8.) But faith lives upon Jesus, though sensible comforts are wanting. (3d.) Abraham returned to his own place; to the tents in *Mamre*: which signifies rebellion, or bitter. He must again feel the rebellions, and taste the bitter of his fallen nature: there is love in this, as well as in the Lord's visits and communings. Wisdom prescribes this portion. Love administers it. Grace makes it profitable. Says our dear Lord, "what I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," (John 13:7.) Our Lord's love is ever the same. His affections change not. Though he may leave off communing with thee below, yet he never ceases praying for thee above. This is precious to the faith of our hearts. Do we come unto God by him? He is able to save us to the uttermost. "He ever lives to make intercession for us," Heb. 7:25.

FEBRUARY 2.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of. 2 Cor. 7:10.

By legal preaching, setting forth the curses of the law, and the terrors of hell, a sinner's conscience may be made to tremble under the dread of damnation. He may be said to repent. "Judas thus repented himself, and said, I have sinned." He might be sorry for it. His sin might make his heart ache, and fill his soul with horrors. But here was no *godly* sorrow. God was not in all his thoughts. No repentance unto salvation: this was out of his sight. His repentance was unto damnation. For "he went out and hanged himself," (Matt. 27:5.) Natural fears and legal terrors may excite sorrow without the grace of repentance. (1st.) What then is godly sorrow? It springs from God, it is excited by the views of God, it is directed to God, and arises in the heart on account of God. With David the soul cries, "against thee *only* have I sinned," (Ps. 51:4.) The heart is pierced to the very quick with anguish, for having sinned against a God in Christ, a sin pardoning, a soul comforting, a most affectionate Father. This is the sorrow of faith. It is grateful to God. (2dly.) It *worketh repentance*. It causes the soul to change its mind and its conduct. Its *mind*. Sin and Satan had deceived it. It foolishly fancied there were some sweet charms in sin, that could make it quite happy. But O, it now feels the wormwood and gall of it. It looks at its sin, and looks at its Saviour, and cries, O my Lord and my God, could I ever be so mad as to turn from thee to sin! I lament my folly. Jesus pardon me. Its *conduct*. Godly sorrow causes the soul to turn away from sin

with loathing and detestation, and to turn to the Lord, with humble faith, holy hope, ardent desire, and earnest cry, O my Jesus, "restore to me the joy of thy salvation: cast me not away from thy presence: take not thy Holy Spirit from me," (Ps. 51:11, 12.) Though sin has made me miserable, yet thou and thou only canst make me happy. (3dly.) This repentance is unto salvation. It brings the soul to Jesus. "There is salvation in him and in no other," Acts 4:12. (4thly.) This is not to be repented of. O my soul, canst thou ever change thy mind, concerning the precious salvation of Jesus, by repentance unto life, from a godly sorrow for sin! Beware then of those "fools who make a mock of sin," (Prov. 14:9.) Of those mad fools, who deride godly sorrow for sin, and laugh at all repentance as downright legality. But says Jesus, "except ye repent, ye shall all perish," Luke 13:3.

'Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree,
And groan'd away a dying life,
For thee, my soul, for thee.

Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murd'ers too.

FEBRUARY 3.

Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. Titus 2:1.

"Like people, like priest," is a Scripture adage, (Hos. 4:9.) Professors generally possess the same ideas of the minister they sit under. Our Lord advises, "take heed what you hear," (Mark 4:24.) The seeds of all heresies are in our nature; they are sooner learned than sound doctrine. Hence Paul's jealousy of, and advice to Titus. He was not only to preach sound doctrine, but the things also which become it. Sound doctrine is to be highly prized, yet it is not to be alone. Good as it is, to have a sound judgment in the doctrines of grace, yet we are ever to consider, they are all according to, and tend to promote *godliness*. They are all of a practical and experimental nature: productive of love in the heart, and holiness in the life. Many err here. Some make little of sound doctrine. They cry out, away with your doctrines, give us practical holiness. These cast contempt upon the word of truth, and impeach the wisdom of the Spirit of truth, in revealing the doctrines of the grace of the everlasting covenant. However they may talk of Christ, yet they lightly esteem the truth as it is in him. From such turn away. "For the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes (or doctrines) of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes," etc. (Ps. 19:7, 8.) Again, there are others, who think and speak of nothing but doctrines. They care nothing about the things which become sound doctrine, such as a self

denying life, a holy walk, a careful abstaining from the very appearance of evil, living in the exercise of spiritual grace, and in the discharge of every Christian duty, striving to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in *all things*," (Tit. 2:10.) Alas! it is common to see such. Like the wild ass, they snuff up the wind of doctrine, bray it over, while their hearts are as cold and dead to spiritual communion with Christ, and the life and power of godliness, as the world which lieth in wickedness. Beware of such. Christianity is life, as well as truth. The gospel is to be experienced in its power, as well as believed in its word. Christ is to be lived upon by faith, and lived to by love, as well as talked of with the tongue. O let us not be content with a form of sound words in our heads: but let us cry earnestly and constantly to our Lord for the life and power of them in our hearts, to influence our lives; so shall we, from precious, heart-felt experience joyfully say, "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John 1:3.

FEBRUARY 4.

He will reprove (or convince) the world of sin. John 16:8.

Has the Spirit so convinced, so reproved you of sin, of the curse of the law of sin, of the wrath of God revealed against all sin; and of that sin of sins, unbelief, that whosoever lives and dies in, is under the wrath of God: so that you have fled for refuge to Jesus, and have taken shelter in his wounds, to be saved from all sin; then you are blessed: your soul is safe, your salvation is sure. The Spirit has glorified the Redeemer in your eyes and to your heart. And Christ will glorify your soul with him in his own kingdom. Is not the Spirit rightly styled the *Comforter*? Did he not act the part of a comforter, even in convincing of sin? What if your heart was broken and bled for sin, yet it was that you might be comforted with the love, and made joyful in the salvation of Jesus. But having thus convinced you of sin, and brought you to Christ for salvation, has the Spirit done with you? Is the work at an end upon you? O, no. "He is promised to abide with us for ever," (John 14:16.) He always carries on the same work, to convince of sin. He is always the comforter, to testify of the Saviour—and in both he maintains the character of the *Holy Spirit*. Why do little things pain you? Some, to keep up the notion of sinless perfection, call them, *things not exactly right*; which you cannot, dare not but look on as *sins* of your nature. Why do you see, feel, and mourn over yourself as a lump of sin? Why are you sensible that you sin in thought, word and deed, and that you can do nothing perfectly, that sin is in all you do, and that when you would do good, evil is present? Why is it that you hate all sin, abhor yourself, and humble yourself as a

poor sinner from day to day before the Lord? Why is all this, but because the Spirit of truth is within and convinces you of sin, and cuts off all hope in yourself on account of it? But does he leave you comfortless? Though he teaches you to see and say, "though all I am is sin," yet you can add, "this does not break my peace." No, he convinces you also of *righteousness*: that Christ's righteousness is yours, and that he is your peace. Of *judgment*: that the judgment of God is according to truth, "that he is just, and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus," (Rom. 4:5.) So that now you live in the life of faith, above the power of sin. Bless the eternal Spirit, O my soul; for I can joyfully sing,

A guilty weak and helpless worm
Into thy arms I fall;
Thou art my strength, my righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.

FEBRUARY 5.

He who is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean. John 13:10.

How precious is the word of the Lord! being in great disorder of body and heaviness of soul, our Lord refreshed and comforted me with these words. Here, Christ most plainly teaches us these blessed truths: (1st.) That every believer is washed by him from the filth of all his sins. (2nd.) That each and every one are equally and alike perfectly clean from all sin, in God's sight; "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. 5:27.)—"Justified from all things before God." (Acts 13:39.) There is not one condemnation against them from God. (Rom. 8:1.) Therefore, (3d.) They need no other cleansing to make them acceptable to God, pure in his sight, meet to come into his presence now, and to enjoy him to all eternity. Rejoice, O my fellow-sinners! and thou, too, my soul! in a lowly, self-abasing, disciple washing, sin-cleansing Jesus. He says, (let carnal reason, legal spirits, and lying Satan suggest what they may) "Clean every whit: ye are clean." Blessed Spirit! thou, who brought us into this precious state—O! cause this glorious truth to shine in our hearts this night, in all its glory and comfort. Eternal thanks to thee, for faith to receive it! Glory to the Son of God, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin. (1 John 1:7.) But though every whit clean; though perfectly cleansed by Christ, yet he knows and we find, that we are daily prone to defile our feet. To him we must come for cleansing from the pollution of our daily walk and conversation. Faith has daily to do with a purifying Saviour. But beware that we ascribe not that cleansing virtue

to the grace of faith, which is only in the blood of Christ. See what blessed news, Peter's mistaken humility, in refusing Christ to wash his feet, brought from our Lord's lips to our hearts. View the love of a gracious, condescending Lord. Did he stoop so low as to wash his disciples' feet? and will he ever be above washing [will it now be beneath him to wash] the fresh-contracted guilt of his dear members, who come unto him? No: harbour not such a dishonourable thought of his love. He knows, he tells us, we need washing of our feet, that we may walk clean and comfortable before him. O! let us come humbly to him, and rejoice that Christ is that fountain opened, and that his precious blood has a continual virtue to cleanse from all sin and uncleanness. Zech. 13:1.

The fountain of Christ,
Assist me to sing,
The blood of our Priest,
Our crucify'd King;

Which perfectly cleanses
From sin and from filth,
And richly dispenses
Salvation and health.

This fountain from guilt
Not only makes pure,
And gives, soon as felt,
Infallible cure:

But if guilt, removed,
Return and remain,

Its pow'r may be proved,
Again and again.

FEBRUARY 6.

Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in ALL THINGS. Titus 2:10.

What pains and expense are we at to adorn our bodies, which must shortly turn to ignoble dust: and our dwellings, which must soon be burnt up with fire? And shall we not study, and take pains to adorn the precious doctrine of our loving God and Saviour in our lives? Let gay clothing and genteel furniture reprove us for, and remind us of this duty. Let us not be like asses with long ears to hear doctrines, but slow of feet to walk in the ways of holiness. To avoid legality, let us not run into licentiousness. This awfully prevails amongst professors in our day. They incessantly dwell on doctrines. But if you aim to reduce them into experience and practice, they cry out, O, you are as legal as an Arminian. This is really like one who should receive food into his mouth, chew it for a season, and then spit it out again: but as it passed not into the stomach to be digested, the body is not nourished by it. So revolving doctrines in the head, rolling them upon the tongue, and not digesting them in the heart, leaves the soul in a lean, starving condition from day to day. What is truth in the head, without fellowship with Christ, who is *the Truth*, in the heart? Christ felt and enjoyed in the power of faith, and the fellowship of the Spirit, will cause souls to study to adorn his doctrine. There will be a cry in such hearts, O what can I do for him, who has done all for me, and is all in all to me? It is the essential doctrine of Christ, that every believer in him is a Son of God, and an heir of glory. We are called to enjoy the comfort of this, and to walk agreeable to this holy faith, in all

things. The duty is ours. The power is of God. But if the love of the world reign in our hearts, if the riches of the world engross our time, if the pleasures of the world possess our affections, if the vanities of the world are our pursuits, how does it appear, that we are the children of God, are concerned for his glory, that we strive to adorn his gospel, or are looking to him for the power to do it? No wonder if the frame of our hearts, the temper of our minds, and the conduct of our lives, instead of adorning the doctrine of Christ, bring discredit upon it. Then we shall live in doubt, and die in distress. O remember this word of the Lord, "them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. 2:30.

Lord, make our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and graces shine,
To prove thy doctrine all divine,

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad,
The honours of our Saviour God;
When thy salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the pow'r of sin.

FEBRUARY 7.

Love not the world. 1 John 2:15.

There is one word too much in this text, to make it agreeable to the spirit and conduct of many professors. As Pharaoh said by the locusts, "take away from me this death only," (Exod. 10:17.) so many may say, take away this *Not* only, for it is death to us; then we shall like the text, and most passionately obey its command, *Love the world*. Does it not seem by the conduct of too many, as though they thus read the text? Now, do not look at Mr. Such-an-one. Look at home. See if you are not the very person, in whom the love of the world reigns. You own it. But instead of falling under conviction of the evil of it, you have an excuse for it. You say, "I have a large family—I ought to obtain a fortune for them—though I have some riches, I must get more—I must love, court, and follow the ways of the world—there is nothing to be done without industry—we must rise early, late take rest, eat the bread of carefulness, and be all day long in pursuit of business." Very well; this is open and honest: the very language of the world. But do you not see gross infidelity stare you in the face? It is plain, where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. You know you cannot, you dare not say, the Lord is my portion: what is there upon earth I desire besides thee? Hear the apostle's decision and tremble. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Two such contrary loves cannot dwell in one heart. It matters not what profession such make. They may be deemed saints of God. What! without the love of God in their hearts? What other idea can we form of a devil, but that he is destitute of the

love of God? James says, a friend of this world is an enemy of God, (4:4.) Well might Paul say, "the love of money is the root of all evil." For like a stinking weed, it chokes the love of God in the heart. See the reason of this exhortation, love not the world. Examine, whether your pursuits are most earnest after the world, to gain more riches, or to enjoy more the love of God in your heart. Consider your calling. It is to be happy in the love of God in Christ. But the love of the world opposes this, and indisposes for this, therefore we must be crucified unto the world. Hard as this is to flesh and blood, yet faith in Christ makes all things possible. Love to Christ makes all things easy. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith,"(John 5:4.) "The love of Christ constraineth us," (2 Cor. 5:14.)

Thy wondrous blood, dear dying Christ,
Can make this world of sin remove;
And thou canst bear me where thou fly'st
On thy kind wings, celestial Dove.

O might I now mount up and see
The glories of th' eternal skies,
What little things these worlds would be,
How despicable to my eyes.

FEBRUARY 8.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, etc. Luke 10:30.

An awful down-hill journey! Here is a true picture of the woeful backsliding of a believer from his Lord. (1st.) "He went down from Jerusalem," which signifies the visions of peace. These are enjoyed by faith, in communion with Christ, and close walking with God. When these are departed from, it is going down, indeed! The way of sin is down hill; the descent is easy; the event, dreadful! It is going down from the delectable mountains, into the dreary vale of Jericho. This place was cursed by Joshua, (6:26.) It was very wicked in the days of Christ; so is this present world now. (2d.) "He fell among thieves;" so the believer, when he gives up himself to sinful company, vain delights and carnal diversions. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, steal his heart from God, and strip him of his raiment of purity and peace. (3d.) "They wounded him." O, the dreadful stabs which sin and apostacy give to the believer's heart and conscience! (4th.) "Departed from him." Having robbed the believer of his comfort in God, now the sense of carnal joys also forsake him. He cannot find those mighty pleasures in sin, which it promised him. (5th.) "Leaving him half dead." Not totally dead to God, nor wholly alive to sin. He can be happy in neither. Awful state! But there is still a spark of spiritual life in the soul. This, all the devils in hell, nor all the men on earth, can never quench. But now, what misery he feels! what wounds, pains, and griefs he groans under! what loss does he deplore! (6th.) "The priest and the Levite pass by

on the other side." The law can neither ease nor cure him: it curses, condemns, and leaves him. But, lastly, who is he that says, "I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely?" (Hos. 14:4.) O! it is the good Samaritan; the precious, ever-loving Friend of sinners! He came where he was: he saw him, and had compassion on him: he bound up his wounds, poured in the oil of his precious grace, and the wine of his heavenly love; "and took care of him." O, my soul! dread the danger of such a journey. Highly esteem the visions of peace. Remember Jericho. Forget not the snares of this wicked world. Beware of thieves. Never, never forget the compassion of the good Samaritan: bless him for his sympathising heart: he is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." (Heb. 4:13.)

Sin's promised joys are turn'd to pain,
And I am drown'd in grief;
But my dear Lord returns again—
He flies to my relief.

Wretch that I am, to wander thus
In chase of false delight
Let me be fasten'd to thy cross
And never lose thy sight.

FEBRUARY 9.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isaiah 1:18.

Whenever our Lord denounces his judgments against hardened and impenitent sinners, we are sure to find a word of grace from his precious lips to our dear trembling souls. His loving heart knew that what he had been declaring against others, his people would take to themselves, reason their hearts into dejection and sorrow, and cast away their hopes and their comforts; therefore, as he frequently, in the days of his flesh, turned aside to his disciples and said, "Come now,"—let not trouble arise in your hearts, let not terror and dread seize on your spirits one moment; so here, "*Let us reason together.*" Do not reason with flesh and blood—with your carnal notions, and your legal hearts; confer not with Satan, who is your enemy and accuser;—but reason with *me*: I am *just*. Do you say, 'Then, I must perish in my sins?' No. "I am just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26.) I am just to forgive thee thy sins. (1 John 1:9.) Reason with me upon the purity and spirituality of my law. Dost thou say, it pronounces thee cursed, for not continuing in all things written therein? True; but my law has been magnified and made honourable by my Son's perfect, unspotted obedience. Therefore, I pronounce thee blessed in him; because I impute his perfect righteousness to thee. Come and reason with me at my throne of grace. Plead thy sins; aggravate them to the most enormous size; multiply them to the greatest number,

as sands by the sea-side; paint them in the deepest hue, as *scarlet* and *crimson*—Blood divine changes their colour to the most perfect whiteness, even as *snow* and *wool*. Not the least stain shall remain: not the least spot shall be seen. "His blood cleanseth from *all sin*." (1 John 1:7.) Thou art all fair, all pure; without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, in my sight. All the guilt of thy sins are atoned: all taken away, by the sacrifice of my Son. They are all covered from my sight, by his perfect righteousness; and I the Lord pronounce thee *blessed*. I impute no sin to thee; no more than if thou hadst never sinned. O, my soul, here is reasoning! thy Lord would have thee happy and holy, and full of love; and free from legal terrors and slavish dread. Therefore, he thus calls on thee to reason with him. True, all this is contrary to thy carnal reason: but it is the truth of God, who says, "I am pacified towards thee." (Ezek. 16:63.)

FEBRUARY 10.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men. Titus 2:11.

Here are three blessed and glorious truths. They demand the constant attention of our minds: they tend to sink into the deepest humility of heart, to excite the greatest joy of spirit, and to inspire the most ardent love and gratitude of soul. (1st.) Salvation. This was the council of heaven; the work of the Son of God; the wonder of angels; the envy of devils, and the glory of apostate, rebellious sinners—sinners, who were born with enmity of heart, rebellion of will, and hatred of affections against God: and who have manifested the enmity of their mind by wicked works; the rebellion of their will, by taking arms against the Lord; and the hatred of their affections, by refusing to lay them down, and submit unto him. O that precious word! full of wonder, grace, and love; “God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (Rom. 5:8-10.) This is a salvation worthy a God of infinite love to bestow. Here is a Saviour, worthy to be received with all readiness of mind, to be embraced with the most cordial affection, and to be gloried in, as the richest blessing, by lost, hopeless, ruined sinners. For, (2d.) This salvation is brought to us. The news of it is sounded in our ears: the report of it is daily made to us. It is displayed and set before us, in all its glory, richness, freeness, and fulness in the gospel, that we may receive it, and enjoy the comforts of it; take it as our own, and rejoice in the salvation of our God. (3dly.) It is

brought to us by the grace of God, which hath appeared. Where? in the person of the Son of his love; and in the gospel of his grace. There, the grace of God appears: there, the salvation of Jehovah shines forth, and is made manifest to all men; to all descriptions of men, Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, it is revealed as a free and full salvation; worthy of *all* acceptation; free from all limitation and restriction. Paul speaks of "knowing the grace of God in truth." (Col. 1:6.) This is done, when any convinced sinner receives and believes in the gospel: it then becomes the power of God to salvation to that poor sinner's soul. He then knows the free favour of God in Christ Jesus. Christ is all his salvation and all his desire. That dear Spirit, who hath convinced him of sin, and enlightened him to see gospel truths and gospel grace, will comfort him by them. Hath the grace of God thus appeared to thee? Hath it brought salvation to thy soul? Dost thou believe the gospel? Then, take heed of mixing any work or duty of thy own, with thy faith and hope in the grace of God and salvation of Jesus. For this were to degrade both, and bring thy soul into bondage to the law of works.

FEBRUARY 11.

Teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. Titus 2:12.

We read in Esdras of three young men, who wrote of the strength of different subjects. The first chose *Wine*; the second, the *King*; the third *Women* and *Truth*. He fully demonstrated, that truth is superior to all the charms of women and the power of a king. "As for truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. And all the people shouted, and said, great is truth, and mighty above all things." (1 Es. 4:38, 41.) Surely, so it is with the truth of God's grace. The stoutest rebels have been conquered by it: the most mighty kings have fallen before it. Whom it conquers, them it also teaches. When it has brought the heart to yield to its sovereign power, it captivates the affections by its sweet influence, and regulates the life by its salutary rules. There is a most vile spirit gone forth, and prevails. Out of a zeal for holiness, and a pretence for perfection, the doctrines of grace are exploded; the God of grace is blasphemed; and, in order that men may not live like beasts, they are taught the pride of devils, which consists in rejecting and denying the truths of God's grace. This teaches *us*. Who? Us, who bow to the sovereignty of God, to submit to the righteousness of his Son, and accept salvation as a free gift of free grace, without our works having the least hand in procuring it, or entitling to it. It teaches us not to labour in the fire of nature's zeal, to establish our righteousness before God; but to deny all ungodliness—every thing which is

contrary to God's nature and will; and worldly lusts—seeing no happiness in indulging them, seeking no comfort from gratifying them; we deny ourselves and deny them, as contrary to our holy faith and heavenly hope. God's grace, or his free favour, and unmerited love in Christ, teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly; aiming to discharge every duty to God, our neighbours, and ourselves, faithfully, conscientiously, and perfectly: but not to be made righteous thereby; not to entitle ourselves to God's favour, but to glorify God, who hath made us righteous in his Son; and to honour him in our lives, who has reconciled himself to us by his Son. This text, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways: it cuts down the vain confidence of self-righteous pharisees: it lops off the unscriptural hope of licentious Antinomians; "Such as walk after their own lusts, ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." (Jude 4.) In their heads they have the notion of truth, while their hearts are strangers to the influence of grace. "From such turn away." (2 Tim. 3:5.)

FEBRUARY 12

Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? 2 Kings 7:2.

This is a daring reply to, "Thus saith the Lord!" The word of the Lord promises, by a great plenty, instantly to relieve his people from a great famine. Doubtless, with a witty sneer, this great peer of the earth uttered this reply to Elisha, as though he had said, "Behold, ye people, do not mind what this mad fellow says; use your reason; judge of the nature of things by your senses: do you think God will make windows in heaven, to pour down corn for you? there is no other possible way for such a supply as Elisha talks of." Thus, with an imperious air he insults the prophet, and exalts his carnal reason and unbelief against the Lord's word of promise. To-day, he prides himself in his wisdom; to-morrow, he perishes, and is trod under foot, as an unbelieving fool. Here, see the cursed nature of carnal reason; here, behold the dreadful evil of rejecting the word of the Lord, by unbelief! Beware of the great, the noble, and the wise of this world. Not many of them are called. Those who are not, are great enemies to God's grace and truth. Look not at the wisdom of the wise, and the judgment of the great of this world: they are fools in the things of God. "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world." (1 Cor. 1:20.) But, my fellow-sinner! see we not somewhat of ourselves in the judgment of this lord? O, Jesus! how does our human reason and unbelief often oppose thy blessed word of grace! When we find a famine in our souls, we think we shall perish for want of the bread of life; we look this way and that for hope; human probability shuts up every

avenue. Still we have "Thus saith the Lord," to look to: great and precious promises to trust in! 'Ah! but,' says carnal reason, 'will the Lord fulfil them?' 'No!' says unbelief; 'it is impossible.' What! after the Lord himself came down from heaven to seek and to save us; after such a miracle of love to us, can we doubt of his care for us? O! let us cry to the Lord, to enable us to trample this man of sin, this lord of unbelief under our feet; that we be not faithless, but believing. "He that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him to us, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.)

Come, let our souls address the Lord,
Who fram'd our nature with his word;
He is our shepherd, we his sheep,
His mercy chose, his pastures keep.

Come, let us hear his voice to-day,
The counsels of his love obey;
Nor let our foolish hearts renew
The sins and plagues that Israel knew.

FEBRUARY 13.

Have salt in yourselves. Mark 9:50.

Salt preserves our food from putrefying, and makes it savoury to our palate. Job asks, "Can any thing that is unsavoury be eaten without salt? is there any taste in the white of an egg?"—(16:6.) What salt is to our food, that the doctrines of the grace of God, and the grace of these doctrines are to the soul. Why could not our Lord have plainly told us so, without using the symbol of salt? He loves to deliver himself in familiar images: they are best suited to our present state. Natural things sensibly strike us, and easily convey spiritual truths to the heart. Our tables are not furnished, if salt be wanting. Meat, without salt, is unsavoury. O! then let every meal remind us of our Lord's words, "Have salt in yourselves." You have daily need to have your souls seasoned with the grace of God, and the words of Christ. (1st.) These will preserve our hearts from receiving, and being putrefied by the seeds of false doctrine. Hearts, well seasoned with the salt of the covenant of grace, will not receive the taint of human error. Thus, we shall be happy in the sense of truth, and the experience of grace in our souls. (2d.) We shall be profitable to others. If our own souls are well seasoned with the grace of Christ, we shall be savoury to others. O, how insipid is the talk of the lips, if the seasoning of grace and the savour of love is not in the heart! Why are some professors so backward to speak of the things of God? why do others speak of them in such a tasteless, unsavoury manner? Alas! their own hearts are not well salted and seasoned with grace. Notions float only in the head; they are delivered from the

tongue: the heart is not impregnated with the salt and savour of them. O, Christian! be concerned for the glory of thy Saviour, for the comfort of thy own soul, and for the good of others, to have salt in thyself. Live every day, pass every hour under the seasoning, savoury truths of Jesus. (3d.) Salt is obtained from the sea. Study, try, and pray to obtain more and more of this precious salt, from the ocean of God's everlasting love in Christ Jesus. (4th.) "With all thine offerings, thou shalt offer salt." (Lev. 2:13.) O! never forget that it is the grace of Christ which makes both thy person, and thy every offering acceptable to God. And it is this which spreads a savour through thy whole conversation: thou canst not be unsavoury whilst thou livest upon this truth, "God hath made me, a sinner, accepted in his beloved Son." (Eph. 1:6.)

Lord, make me know, and taste, and feel
The savour of thy heav'nly love:
Unto my inmost soul reveal
A foretaste of thy joys above.

So shall my heart, my lip, my life
Declare the seas'ning of thy grace:
My soul be freed from legal strife,
To walk with joy before thy face.

FEBRUARY 14.

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren, that are in the world. 1 Pet. 5:9.

I had no sooner wrote this text, but was constrained to say, Blessed be God for his holy scriptures. My poor mind has been often perplexed and distressed with sore attacks of Satan. Hence, I have been ready to call in question my state. Have been almost brought to conclude, that if I was a member of Christ, and a child of God, surely he would not suffer the enemy to his glory and my peace, thus to tempt, buffet, and distress my soul. I am persuaded, this is not my case only. All the brethren of Christ are subject to the same perplexity, from the same cause. Satan gains an advantage over us, for want of knowing and considering what the apostle here lays down. It is a fixed truth. All the brethren of the Lord Jesus are subject to the same trials and afflictions from Satan, one as well as another. Therefore we should not be surprised nor staggered by them. Instead of thinking it strange, or asking, why does the Lord suffer it so to be? Peter tells us how to act. Satan will attack us all through this life. It is a warfare. Therefore be on your guard. *Resist him*. Give back not an inch. Give way not a moment. Indulge not the least sin. Resist his first motion of temptation. Oppose his every artful device. Stand against his every subtle wile, *stedfast*, undismayed at them, undaunted by them, however horrible and devilish. The more they are so, the more easily known from whom they came. *In the faith*, honour your Lord's heavenly truths. Oppose them to Satan's hellish lies. Bring your Lord's precious

promises against Satan's vile suggestions. Stand stedfast to, thus it is written: thus I believe: thus I will honour my Lord's word. Never, never let go that faithful saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." Glory in this. Hold up this as your shield against all the fiery darts of the Devil. With all his infernal injections, he can make no worse of you than a *sinner*. This you own. Yea, and that you deserve hell and damnation too for your sins; but in the faith of Jesus, you are a saved, justified, pardoned sinner—(there is no condemnation against you,) an adopted son of God. Stand fast in this faith. Abide stedfast by this truth. Glory in your Lord for it. Give him the glory of it. In the confidence of it "resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Brethren, it is our common lot
With Satan to engage;
Think what a pow'rful Lord we've got,
Fear not his hellish rage.

Stand in the strength of Christ thy Lord,
Arm'd with his word divine,
Stedfast in faith, he'll help afford:
Christ's victory is thine.

FEBRUARY 15.

His name shall be called Counsellor. Isa. 9:6.

Litigious spirits are fond of law. Paul absolutely forbids the brethren of Christ going to law one with another, (1 Cor. 6:7.) Among other reasons this is the greatest. They are concerned in a suit, which will last their whole lives, and which requires all their time and attention. Though their cause has been tried again and again: though they have gained cause after cause, yet their adversary continues as litigious as ever. He is continually accusing them, and preferring bills of indictment against them. He sets the world upon us. He stirs up the flesh in us. He brings heinous charges against us. He is the accuser of the brethren before God, and to our own consciences night and day, (Rev. 12:10.) Have you heard nothing from Satan your adversary and accuser this day? If you have, be not dejected. Let him accuse, say, and do his worst. It is our unspeakable comfort, we have a wonderful Counsellor. He pleads our cause before the throne of justice above. He pleads within us in the court of conscience. He counsels and advises us by his Word and Spirit. His true and righteous pleadings for us, shall prevail over all Satan's accusations against us. Would you wish your cause in better hands? never attempt to take it out of his hands. Continually consult him. Leave all to him. For, consider, (1st.) Jesus in the eternal council, voluntarily, unsought and unasked, stood forth, and engaged to be our Counsellor. Like a generous counsellor in a court, seeing the poverty of an arraigned prisoner, freely, without money or price, undertakes to plead his cause. O wonderful love! O kind compassion! (2d.) He is a *wonderful*

Counsellor. For though law and justice condemn, yet he obtains an acquittal in court for all his clients. Most wonderful in his plea. Not our innocence, sincerity, goodness, etc. No, he owns our guilt and vileness. He pleads his own work for us. The blood he shed for our sins: his obedience unto the law for our justification; and his sufferings for our salvation. Justice says, I am satisfied, I forgive them. *Truth* records the sentence. *Mercy* declares, I will save them. (3d.) O wonderful counsellor! it is sinners, none but sinners thou pleadest for. O for this my soul loves thee. God be merciful to me, a sinner. This is ever my plea. I take it up. Lord, shew me, from law and justice, that thou art just, whilst thou justifiest the ungodly. Desperate as my case is, may I ever flee to thee, and ever consult thee. "Thou hast the words of eternal life," John 6:68.

Jesus is our God and Saviour,
Guide, Counsellor, and Friend,
Bearing all our misbehaviour,
Kind and loving to the end.

Trust him, he will not deceive us,
Though we hardly deem of him;
He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave him.

FEBRUARY 16.

Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Luke 18:1.

Then, there can be no room for despair; for prayer exports wants, and imports blessings. But our dear Lord knows, there is in us, at all times, a backwardness to prayer; this he would remove. It arises from fainting; this he would prevent. Therefore he opposes prayer to fainting; for fainting prevents praying. Have you not found it so? When weary and faint in your mind, when your spirits are oppressed, your frame low and languid, you have thought, this is not a time for prayer. Yea, but it is. Pray *always*. Now, sigh out the burden of your heart and the sorrows of your spirit; now, though in broken accents, breathe your complaints into your Father's ear; now, cry to Him who loveth you, and careth for you with the love and care of the most affectionate parent. What makes us faint? Do troubles and afflictions? here is a reviving cordial: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Ps. 50:15.) Does a body of sin and death? here is a supporting promise: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13.) Do we faint, because we have called and prayed again and again to the Lord against any besetting sin, prevailing temptation, rebellious lust, or evil temper: and yet the Lord has not given victory over it? Still, says the Lord, pray *always*; persevere; be importunate; faint not. Remember that blessed word, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready." (John 7:6.) "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. 26:41.) Note the difference between being tempted, and entering into temptation. We are assured,

“in due time we shall reap if we faint not.” (Gal. 6:9.) Do we find the spirit willing, but the flesh weak? and, because of our coldness, deadness, and languor in prayer, do we faint? You cannot pray to please yourself: you think your prayers irksome to God; and therefore do you faint, and are ready to give over praying? Look at David; he begins to pray in a very heartless, hopeless way.—“How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord! for ever?” etc. See how he concludes: he breaks out in full vigour of soul.—“I will sing unto the Lord; for he hath dealt bountifully with me.” (Psalm 13.) Above all, look to Jesus, who ever lives to pray for you: look for his Spirit, to help your infirmities. Rom. 8:26.

Pray'r is the work of strongest saints,
Of miserable sinners too;
Whene'er our feeble spirit faints,
May we by pray'r learn what to do.

Pray always, soul; why should thou faint?
Know, Christ thy strength and righteousness:
Come to his throne, tell him thy want,
And he with joy and peace will bless.

FEBRUARY 17.

Now abideth faith, hope, charity. 1 Cor. 13:13.

Where do these graces abide? in regenerate hearts. What is faith? a precious grace, the gift of God to miserable sinners. Lord, give us the comfort of it to-night. Say some, 'faith is an assurance that *my* sins are pardoned; that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.' Indeed it is not. They further add, 'No one has faith without this assurance: if they have it not, they are in a state of wrath.' This is false: this notion has inflated many with a vain hope, while it has distressed sincere souls without reason. Many who contend for this assurance of faith, believe a lie with it; for they say, 'Those whom Christ has so loved as to die for, and whose sins are now forgiven, may at last perish.' Such an assurance is not worth a straw. This is not the faith of God's elect; for it gives the lie to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith: it contradicts his double oath, "*Verily, verily*, I say unto you, he who believeth on me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47.) Leave the vain notions of such; look into the divine word for the true nature of faith. It is neither more nor less, than a belief of God's word: giving credit to God for what he speaks therein; "Believing on his Son Jesus Christ, according to his commandment." (1 John 3:23.) Dost thou believe thus in thine heart? then, faith abides there. Consider, there is faith, and "the furtherance and joy of faith." (Phil. 1:25.) If you have faith, though but as a grain of mustard-seed, you will *see* Christ as precious to you, a miserable sinner; you will *receive* him as the most inestimable gift of God, to save you, a lost sinner; you will *go* to him, as the one object of your

hope, and the chief desire of your soul; you will *rely* on his death, as the only *requirement* for your sins, and trust in his righteousness alone to justify you; you will *lay hold* on him as the only refuge for your guilty soul; you will *live upon him*, that you may find joy and peace in him, and grow up into him in all things; you will *glory* of, and in him alone, saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus." (Gal. 6:14.) Hence, you will grow out of conceit with yourself; dead to sin, dead to your own righteousness, and dead to the world. This, this is the faith of the operation of God, which lives and abides in new-born souls. "In thus believing, we may be fully assured, God will fill us with all joy and peace." Rom. 15:13.

Father, I bless thee for the gift
Of Christ, thy precious Son:
Spirit, in praise my soul I lift,
For faith, my Lord to own.

Let precious faith in Christ abide,
With all its healing pow'r:
To cleave to Christ, whate'er betide
Me in the darkest hour.

FEBRUARY 18.

Now abideth—hope. 1 Cor. 13:13.

Gospel faith and Christian hope are twin graces in the heart: they are inseparable. Faith exists not without hope. Hope has no being without faith. Such as a man's faith is, such is his hope. They both flow from God's word, as light and heat from the sun. Take away a word spoken, and faith has no being. Without a promise made, hope has no existence. Faith receives and takes possession of Christ, as set forth in the word: hope expects all promised blessings, comforts, and joys in him, with him, and from him, according to the word. "The word of God liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:23.) Jesus, who is the essential word, "is our hope." (1 Tim. 1:2.) He is the cause of our hope; the object of our hope; and the life of our hope. Therefore, our hope abideth. Yea, though all in nature fails; all in sense forsakes us; and all, as to outward appearances, are against us;—though corruptions rage and foam, and lift up their boisterous waves: though, like St. Paul, we are in the great deep, and see neither sun, moon, nor stars for a season,—yet hope abideth. For Jesus, the object of hope, lives. The grace of hope cannot perish: it is an anchor to the soul; it keeps it sure and steady. Why? because it is not cast within us, but without us. What a foolish mariner would he be, who should think his vessel would ride safe and steady against wind and tide, because he had an anchor on board! Just as foolish are those professors, who cast the anchor of hope within themselves, on their own graces, inherent righteousness as it is called, etc. Why, as the sea-phrase is, the anchor will come home; it will not hold the vessel: there is

no ground for it to fasten in. But the Christian's hope "entered into that within the veil." (6:19.)—Into heaven itself. It fixes and fastens upon Jesus, who is entered into heaven *for us*. As by faith we receive the atonement of Christ for our sins, and trust in his righteousness for our justification; so hope looks for, and expects the heart-reviving, soul-sanctifying comforts of this from the Holy Spirit in time; and all the glory and blessedness which Jesus hath, by his life and death, obtained for us, in an endless eternity. Faith has to do with things invisible to sense. God's truth is the foundation of faith. Faith keeps hope in lively exercise; "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Tit. 2:13.

The word of God calls forth my faith,
From thence my hope doth spring:
Founded alone on what God saith,
I can rejoice and sing.

His word is truth, his promise sure;
Hence, faith and hope abide:
My soul in safety shall endure,
Nor aught from Christ divide.

FEBRUARY 19.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fainteth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. Isa. 41:17.

It is common to hear people say, 'Such-an-one is a great believer.' What idea strikes our mind of such a person? Are we not apt to think he is very rich in himself, having a vast stock of inherent righteousness? This is wrong: he is just the reverse. He is one, who knows himself to be *poor* and *needy*. His great faith leads him out of himself, to the great God and our Saviour, to receive, out of his fulness, grace upon grace. He confesses, I am a poor and needy sinner, living upon the unsearchable riches of Christ. The sight of our poverty, and sense of our need, the Holy Spirit keeps up in our minds all through life. This makes Christ, and his riches of grace, precious to us. Some say, Such-an-one is only a *seeker* of the Lord. This is just what God's children are all their days. "They are poor and needy, and they seek water." Their souls are athirst. "And there is none." They can find no water of consolation in the whole world: they have no spring of comfort in themselves; they can draw none from their own righteousness. "Their tongue fails for thirst." The sin of their nature, like a scorching fever, burns within them. This, the hardened in sin and self-righteous feel not. Regenerate souls do: they thirst after the cooling stream of Christ's grace and salvation, to refresh them: their tongue fails, in uttering a word of their own works and faithfulness, etc. All their cry is about their poverty and need, and thirst after Jesus. Well, says he, "I the Lord will hear them."—Yea, and answer them,

too. "If any man thirst, let him come unto *me* and drink." (John 7:37.) 'Well, but I have been this poor, needy, thirsty creature ever since the Lord first convinced me of sin, and brought me to Christ for salvation; while I hear others talk of their riches, goodness, perfection,' etc. Let them talk on: bless the Spirit for what you are. Expect to be poor and needy all your days. Rejoice at what the Lord says, "I will not forsake them." Who? poor needy, thirsty souls. Such are the work of his Spirit; the glory of his Son; and the delight of the Father's soul. Christ upbraids those who say, "They are rich and increased in goods," etc. (Rev. 3:17.) "He filleth the hungry with good things, the rich he sendeth empty away." (Luke 1:53.) For Jesus says to all his people, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich!" (Rev. 2:9.) Poor, in themselves; rich, in him.

"Why droop our hearts—why flow our eyes
While such a voice we hear?
Why rise our sorrows and our fears,
While such a Friend is near?

To all thy other favours, add
A heart to trust thy word;
And death itself shall hear us sing,
While resting on the Lord.

FEBRUARY 20.

He hath put a new song in my mouth. Psalm 40:3.

Some sing, when they have cause to be sad: others are sad, when they have reason to sing and rejoice. Some go on merrily to hell; others go on sorrowing to heaven. When the grace of Jesus is in the heart, a new song is put into the mouth. This is a song of new covenant love. This we are to sing all our days on earth, and for ever and ever in glory. In passing the streets, we meet with many occurrences, which remind us of our Beloved. It is sweet to spiritualize carnal things. I was much delighted with a carnal song, which concludes thus:

All the time is thrown away,
But what is spent in love.

I thought this was very true of the love of our Saviour. This Psalm is applied to Christ in his manhood state. (Heb. 10.) A new song was put in his mouth on our accounts. He says, "Many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord." See hence, our spiritual joy springs from seeing Christ's work in our salvation: knowing that he experienced his Father's upholding power, as man and mediator; and beholding his triumph over all his and our enemies. Look at this; yea, look and look till you can say, O, Jesus! my whole soul loves thee. For hadst thou failed in thy work, my soul had been irrecoverably lost, for ever. But, now thou hast finished thy Father's work and my salvation, I am saved for ever. I see it; I trust in the Lord: and, having this confidence in my heart, this song is put into

my mouth, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:10.) Now, I can adopt my Saviour's words, "Thou hast brought me up from a horrible pit, out of miry clay; set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." Therefore, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise unto my God, while I have my being." (Ps. 104:33.) I charge thee, O my soul! never, never forget the horrors of dread, the terrors of fear, the agonies of pain, and conflicts of sufferings, thy Lord endured from men and devils, and from his Father's fiery wrath and inexorable justice, for thy sins and thy salvation! O, sing of His mighty conquests! Rejoice for his glorious triumphs over all the powers of sin, death, and hell. Well might the apostle exhort believers thus, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." (Eph. 5:10.) "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35:10.

Old songs of vain and carnal mirth
No more delight my heart;
New songs of Jesus' life and love,
Spread joy thro' ev'ry part.

Thou loving Spirit! thee I praise,
For grace, of Christ to sing:
He is my joy, my righteousness,
My Saviour and my King.

FEBRUARY 21.

O Lord! thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, and every one mocketh me. Jer. 20:7.

A poor deluded perfectionist lately made a great noise in London: he blasphemously pretended to be as holy as God himself, to have revelations from him, and peremptorily fixed upon a day when the world was to be destroyed. He deceived many, and alarmed more. But time proved how artfully he had been deceived himself; and now, what is most awful, he has cast off all sense of religion, ridicules it, charges all his delusion upon God, and quotes these very words of Jeremiah, to prove that God had deceived him. One would not mention this by way of reflection, or triumph over this unhappy man; but, as a caution against this mad, wildfire notion of sinless perfection, which so spreads itself among a certain description of professors. But did God really deceive Jeremiah? Can we suppose that he charges God with it? The very thought is daring and impious. After giving several senses upon the words, the learned Dr. Gill very judiciously says, "It is best of all to translate them, as they will bear: O, Lord! thou hast *persuaded* me, and I was *persuaded*." This sense he takes from Luther and others. The prophet did not run before he was sent; but was called, and effectually convinced of his mission, by the power of his Spirit. Just so is every believer. (1st.) Divinely called, and effectually persuaded to come to Christ, and he his disciple. Christian, consider! do not you see somewhat here suited to your own case? Was not God stronger than you, and therefore prevailed? Will not you fall

down to-night at the feet of sovereign grace, and own its effectual power; and give the Lord of all grace, all the glory from your whole heart? (2d.) Are you like Jeremiah, in a complaining, unbelieving frame? Are you saying, O Lord, I should never have come to thee, and been thy disciple, if thy grace had not prevailed over me! Being come, I encouraged my soul to hope for nothing but comfort all through life. But, alas! I am disappointed and dejected: men laugh at me and deride me. One says, I am an enthusiast; another, my brain is turned: the world says, I am only pursuing whims and chimeras of my own fancy; and Satan mocks and derides me daily, crying, now where is your comfort? where is now your God? Blessed Christian! consider, (3d.) and be not dismayed, it is your glory, as it was the prophet's, to have a loving-hearted, covenant God, a compassionate Saviour, to go to, who is touched with a feeling of your infirmities. You can pour out your heart before him, appeal to him, tell him of your sorrows, treatment and heart-felt distress. Though all the world derides you, God delights over you: though Satan insults, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

FEBRUARY 22.

Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us. 1 John 3:24.

"That the soul be without knowledge, is not good." (Prov. 19:22.) What knowledge is to be compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ? All other will perish. But, "this is life eternal." (John 17:3.) "For he is the true God and eternal life." (1 John 5:20.) Does he abide in us? Could we possess the whole world without this, we should only grasp a phantom. We might as well seek to fill our belly, and satisfy our hunger with the east wind, as be happy without Christ abiding in us. (1st.) What is implied in this? We know what it is to receive and entertain a friend in our dwelling. According to our love to him, and delight in him, so we treat him. Love will set the best things before him, give him the pre-eminence in all things, and accommodate him with the best room in our house. Yea, love is jealous, lest all things should not please, and will apologize. Now, is it so between Christ and our souls? have we received him, as the best and dearest friend, into our hearts? Do we welcome him, delight in him, invite his stay, entreat him to forgive what he sees amiss in our poor accommodation? Then, he abideth in us. But, (2d.) Can any one know and be sure that Christ abideth in him? Yes, blessed be God! this is not confined to the first age of Christianity; not limited to the apostles only: but it is the precious privilege of every believer in Christ: for it is our comfort, that, Jesus being glorified, the Spirit is given to *all* his redeemed, to testify of him. See (3d.) This knowledge is, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Take heed and beware

that you do not grieve the Spirit, by ascribing that as common to nature, which can only be effected by His grace. Do you see, and know, and feel yourself to be a poor miserable sinner, from day to day? Is sin the grief of your soul, and the burden of your body? Do you delight in the sound of the gospel, and in the precious name of the Saviour of sinners? Is he the hope of your soul, the trust of your heart, and the joy of your mind? Do you desire his company, love his presence, and delight in his work of salvation? Were he now to appear to you in person, and ask, What is the one wish of thy soul? Ask, it shall be done unto thee. Could you reply, Lord, that I may know thee as my own dear Saviour from sin and damnation, into holiness and salvation? Is it so? Who gave thee this spirit? not Satan. It springs not in the garden of nature: it is from the Spirit of Christ. You may truly say, "I know Christ abideth in me, by the Spirit which he has given me." (1 John 3:23.)

The Spirit make known
What Jesus hath done;
By faith we it own,
And choose him, and glory on him alone.

The Spirit we praise,
Who, in these last days,
Affections doth raise,
Jesus to love, & to live on his grace.

FEBRUARY 23.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. Eph. 5:8.

Unregenerate persons, raised from indigence to opulence, do not love to hear of their pedigree: they see not the hand of the Lord in it. What detracts from their character and merit, hurts them. But disciples of Christ like to hear of, love to look back upon what they were by nature, that they may ascribe fresh praise to the Lord, who of his mere grace "raised their degenerate souls out of the dust, and lifted their needy souls from the dunghill, and has set them with the princes of his people." (Psalm 113:7, 8.) We are here reminded, "Ye were"—what? dark, having some glimmering light of God, his truth, his ways, etc. Nay more, darkness itself. Blind to them, as if totally deprived of sight. Ignorant of them as a beast: as dark, respecting them, as we should be of natural objects without the sun. We walked in darkness, and knew not that we were in the high road to hell. But now, blessed *now!* O, wonder of grace! ye are—what? enlightened by the Lord? have light from the Lord? Yes! this is true. But more; "We have a light *in* the Lord, like the angel which John saw, standing in the sun." (Rev. 19:17.) We have not only the light of life, but we are in Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, and the light of the world. Here, we see our Father's glory shining in the face of Christ—feel his love in him—behold his grace and truth, which came by him—enjoy precious promises in him—know the glorious doctrines taught by him: all which lead to, and centre in him. Hence we look down upon the world with contempt, upon sin with abhorrence, upon Satan

with defiance, upon carnal men with pity, and up to our Lord with love and praise; for "we have an unction from him, and know all things." (1 John 2:20.) His truths are our delight. "His commandments are not grievous!" (chap. 5:3.) Here is all comprised in one word, *Walk as children of the light*. But how shall I know I am a child of light? Strange question! Just as strange as for a person with his eyes open, in midday, to ask, How do I know I can see? But if you do not enjoy the comfort of light, it is because you do not walk as a child of light. There are many such dark walkers. No marvel, they are uncomfortable professors. St. Paid wept on account of such. See them described: "they mind earthly things." (Phil. 3:19.) They have a tongue for Christ, but the world has their heart. Beware of such: refrain from such. For, "If we say we have fellowship with Christ, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin." (1 John 1:6, 7.)

FEBRUARY 24.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20.

Our hopes and comforts rise or fall, according to our conceptions and belief of what Christ is in himself, and what he is to us. Attend to this. You will find this true in your experience. Therefore it is of no small moment, whether you believe Christ to be God over all, or only a mere man. Yea, it is of the utmost importance: it enters into the very life, peace, and joy of your soul. Our Lord here puts this beyond a doubt. None but God is, at one and the same time, in more places than one. But Christ declares, "Wherever my disciples are gathered together in my name, there am I." Therefore Christ is the omnipresent God. This is the joy of our faith; this, the glory of our souls. Now, it should be our grand concern to bring this into experience and practice. (1st.) Remember "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Prov. 15:3.) O, soul! what have you to do at places devoted to sin and vanity? Know, the eyes of the Lord are there. If he sees you there, he will surely make you smart for it. But, (2d.) Our Lord delights in the assembling of his disciples in his name. If but two or three, no matter where. O! let this call up your attention to his name. Let this reprove professors, that they do not always meet in Christ's name, speak to each other more of his glorious person, and precious salvation: this is the way to be helpers of each other's faith, hope, and love in the Lord. Be ashamed of yourselves, ye frozen-hearted, tongue-tied professors! who can be all talk for the things of the world, but dumb when precious Jesus is the

theme. What! can you go, day after day, without calling your family together, to speak a word of Jesus to them, and to Jesus for them? O, what seasons of peace, comfort, and heavenly mindedness do you abridge yourselves of! The presence of a king makes a court. The King of kings makes a court, a temple in your houses; yea, in your hearts, when you assemble in his name. (3d.) Let this precious word encourage you to this. "There *am I* in the midst of them." Have you not found it so? the unworthiest of all has. "*There am I!*" as though Christ was first there, waiting for us. Can His presence be with us, without shedding his light, life, liberty, and power among us? No: no more than the sun can shine in its meridian splendour, without darting light and heat. (4th.) Remember two or three are within the compass of the promise. Not angels, not sinless men; but poor, miserable sinners, Christ delights to be in the midst of. O! love and praise our dear Lord, for his marvellous condescension, and this precious declaration. Study more and more to improve it, to build up each other's souls in them, and to glorify his precious name. See his affectionate notice of such. Mal. 3:16, 17.

FEBRUARY 25.

What is your life? James 4:14.

A short day, full of evils; a span long, replete with crosses. Each revolving day brings its troubles; each fleeting moment, its sorrows. 'Yes,' says a soul, 'I am a living witness of this: I am a mark for the enemy to shoot his fiery darts at; against man he daily renews his attacks, constantly buffets, and is ever busy with his subtle devices. Each morning I rise, I am brought into the field to exercise my arms; or on the stage, to conflict with my enemies. Truly, I am almost worn and wearied out. What with a sense of indwelling corruptions, the plague of my heart, the attacks of Satan, the troubles of the world, want of the sense of my Lord's love, and the workings of unbelief;—my life is one continued scene of sorrow and distress.' Remember, for your comfort, your life is short: your rest shall be eternal and glorious. Consider what one sweetly says, "It is the great work and difficulty, and yet duty of a christian, to believe unseen and unfelt love, in and under well-seen and well-felt difficulties." sometimes the Lord joins these together, as in 1 Thess. 1:6. "Having received the word in much affliction; with joy in the Holy Ghost." Then, it is easy. But often the trouble is felt, while the love is hidden in the word. What is to be done in such a case? Faith can find love in the word of promise: receive it, fasten upon it, and live by it. Here opens a most delightful scene, a most glorious prospect! Here, lose sight of *your* life: it is swallowed up in that word, "Ye are dead, your life is hid with Christ in God: Christ is our life. (Col. 3:3, 4.) Never consider yourself, without Christ; nor your life, without his; nor his enemies,

without his perfect victory over them, in your nature, for your person, and to your comfort and joy in him. Now say, what is your life? You have lost all the glory and comfort of it in Adam: you find all restored, with infinite addition, to you in Christ. Therefore, whatever your feelings and frames may be, yet live by faith upon him, above corrupt sense and carnal reason. This is a mystery unknown to the world. When you see professors following the pleasures of this life, seeking happiness from the gay scenes of vanity, you behold them turning their backs upon Christ, shewing the greatest contempt to him; and, in effect, saying of him, 'The Lord, with all the treasures of his life and love, cannot make my life happy: I am forced to take up with the delights of the play-house, and rant and revel in scenes of mirth and jollity.' . . . From such a life—such a spirit—and such professors of Christ, good Lord! deliver us.

I have a better life than this,
'Tis hid in Christ with God:
Let death this mortal body seize,
I have a sure abode.

Yea, now I live, (for Christ's my life)
I taste the joys of love;
And when I die, then ends my strife—
I go to joys above.

FEBRUARY 26.

It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. Col. 1:19.

The religion of nature is the religion of pride. Pride is of the devil. Pride works by a lie, and keeps the soul in unbelief of the truth. Hence, we naturally think some change in us, some good done by us, causes God to be our Father, and we consider ourselves as his very good children. This notion obtains in the mind of many, and is the cause of their rejecting the everlasting covenant of the three-one Jehovah, and denying the covenant relations and transactions of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They are so filled with themselves, with their Stuff of inherent righteousness, free-will, moral agency, and one knows not what unscriptural jargon, that they see not all fulness in Jesus, where it pleased the Father it should dwell. Lord! empty us of all self-fulness, that we may receive out of thy fulness. *The Father*, by covenant love, took on him that near and dear relation to all his chosen, when his eternal, co-equal Son, covenanted to become man, to sustain the curse for man, to satisfy justice, and obtain every blessing for sinners: this pleased the Father. And as man had lost all holiness, happiness, and blessedness by the first Adam, and was quite empty of all good,—all fulness is treasured up and dwells in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven: this also pleased the Father. The Father of whom? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9.) Here the covenant office of the blessed Spirit is engaged, to convince us of sin, to empty us of self-sufficiency, and to shew us the fullness that dwells in Jesus

for us. Hence, here is a plain answer to that question, How may I know whether I have the Spirit of Christ or not? Do you see yourself stripped of all righteousness, emptied of all good, prone to every evil? This is the teaching of the Spirit. Do you see the fulness that dwells in that glorious Man, Christ Jesus? that you must receive pardon of sin, justifying righteousness; adoption, to be a child of God, by faith in him; sanctification, and eternal redemption out of his fulness? Are you pleased at this? Are you satisfied to come, day after day, as a self-emptied sinner, hungry and thirsty, to receive out of his fulness? Can you say so? Then, you have the Spirit of God; for what pleased the Father, pleases you. O! rejoice in this. You may say with the apostles and all saints, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.)

Lord, pull our haughty spirits down,
Our empty hearts renew;
O! make us fall, and see, and own
All fulness in thy Son.

Spirit of grace! lead us to Christ,
As to our fountain head,
Out of his fulness to be blest
With life and living bread.

FEBRUARY 27.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy. Zeph. 3:17.

A truly gracious heart is restless and unhappy, when it experiences distance from the Lord. Notions in the head may satisfy formal, dry professors; but those who are alive to God, cannot rest without enjoying his presence. They will draw nigh to him, praying him, "Draw nigh to my soul, and say, I am thy salvation." That precious word lives and abides in our heart: "Now, in Christ Jesus, we sinners, who, in times past, were far off from God, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13.) Hence, we are called upon, "Sing, shout, be glad, rejoice with all the heart." Yea, thou God-fearing, soul-trembling sinner! even thou, the Lord has in his eye, and speaks from the love of his heart, "Fear thou not, let not thine hands be slack." (Zeph. 3:14-16.) Dread not thy mighty, thy many enemies. Put on courage. Lift up the hands which hang down. Take hold of thy Lord's word. For, (1st.) "*The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.*" The might of the Lord his God, animated the heart of young David, when he went to fight the Philistine giant. Hence, you hear not one word of himself, of his own might and power, etc.; but, the Lord has done this and that—and the Lord will deliver now—I come forth in the name of the Lord. So St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." (Phil. 14:13.) Now, here is the nature and work of faith. When Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, self-confidence is destroyed. Says the Soul, 'I am weak and helpless: I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself, but my sufficiency is of God.' (2

Cor. 3:5.) This language is a proof, that the Lord is in the midst of that soul: he has proved that he is mighty in it, by "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every high thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) His mighty salvation is begun in that heart: it has no cause for dejection. For, (2d.) "*He will save.*" You believe the Lord's power. He is able to save: you cannot doubt that; his word declares it; his work proves his willingness. Exercise your faith upon his will to save you, both from all your fears and all your foes. Cast away all vain and foolish notions of terms and conditions of salvation. See it all cast upon *the will* of Jesus. For, (3d.) "He will rejoice over thee with joy." It was his joy to bleed and die, in agony and torture for thee. It is his joy that thou comest and criest to him, as a lost sinner, for salvation. He will rejoice in his work for thee, his grace in thee, and his salvation of thee. O! well mayest thou be called on, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again rejoice." (Phil. 4:4.)

FEBRUARY 28.

He will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.
Zeph. 3:17.

Instead of two meditations on this verse, it is worthy the study of our whole lives. Eternity itself will never exhaust the fulness of that rich and glorious grace contained in it. When the vanity of the creature, and the richness of God's everlasting love and free grace are the subjects, well might the preacher say, "Of making many books there is no end; though much study may be weariness to the flesh." (Eccles. 12:12.) Yet such study is reviving and refreshing to the spirit. Well, saith the poor sinner, 'I remember the day of my espousal to Jesus: it was sweet. My heart was filled with peace and joy in believing. But, ah me! I have lost my first love: I am cold, and dark, and dead: I go on heavily, while the enemy oppresses me, and is daily saying to me, Where is now your God, in whom you once delighted, and of whom you formerly made your boast? Thy love is cold to him: he has totally withdrawn his love from thee: thy manifold sins have turned his love to thee, into perfect hatred against thee.' Dost thou know this language? How dost thou treat it?—as the voice of a friend, or an enemy? What saith thy Lord? "*He will rest in his love.*" Believe him: reject the lying accusation of Satan. Look not at thy scanty love to the Lord, but to the fulness and perpetuity of his love to thee. This will excite thy love. He rests everlastingly, and unchangeably the same, in his love to thee. God is as unalterable and unvariable in his love to thy person, as in hatred to thy sins. He is silent in his love: he forgets thy sins: he remembers thine iniquities no

more. This is the declaration of covenant love." (Jer. 31:34.) Therefore, he will be *silent* in his love. When the terrors of the law ring a loud peal in thine ears, and Satan brings dreadful charges against thy conscience, yet thy Lord is silent. He condemns thee not: his love covers the multitude of thy sins: his righteousness justifies thee from all iniquity. In the days of his flesh, when a poor sinner stood before him, and was vehemently accused to him, he wrote upon the ground: he was silent. When he lifted up himself, he said to the poor soul, "I do not condemn thee; go and sin no more." (John 8:11.) He considers his toils and sufferings for sinners. "*I will joy over them with singing.*" Ah! but our Saviour's great joy would be turned into sorrow, if but one of his beloved, redeemed sheep were to perish. But that is as impossible, as for him to cease to be God. Now, think of all this fulness of might, love, joy, and delight, which thy Lord declares he has in thee, and over thee, O my soul! The Lord excite confidence in him, and cause thy heart to burn in holy love and sweet gratitude to him.

FEBRUARY 29.

Out of season. 2 Tim. 4:2.

I have often thought, as passing by the great number of churches in London, what manner of stones and what buildings are here! What noble cages are these! But what pitiful birds occupy them! They scarcely ever sing in them above once a week; and then, it is a strange wild note, not the joyous song of salvation, by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God. They do not follow St. Paul's solemn advice, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, *out of season.*" If Christ's ministers are thus charged to preach out of season, this charge is equally binding upon all his disciples, to hear out of season also. Consider some reasons for this. (1st.) By the preaching of the word, faith grows and is strengthened. This truth ever remains, and will be made good in experience, "Faith cometh by hearing." (Rom. 10:17.) (2d.) If faith cometh, then Christ, with peace, love, joy, holiness, and heaven cometh to the heart. O then, if so, need there be any other reason added for constant hearing? (3d.) The devil cometh out of season. You are never totally freed from his force, fraud, and subtlety. How can you withstand him? Only by resisting him stedfastly in the faith. (1 Pet. 5:9.) How will you overcome him? "Only by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony." (Rev. 12:11.) By constant hearing of the word, we get instructions in Satan's art and devices, encouragement by our Lord's victory over him, and also have our faith strengthened to resist and overcome him. (4th.)

Trials and afflictions come every day. How are we to obtain support and patience under them, comfort in them, sanctification by them, and a prospect of being delivered from them? From the ministry of the word. Mind what is said of the disciples of old. "Ye received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. 1:6.) More than twenty years ago, with great distress of soul, and much weakness of body, I have often walked near three miles to hear the word. My legs have dragged on heavily. I have been ready to say, You have often carried me to the play-house, and now you must carry me to the Lord's house. For, (5th.) Blessed be our Lord, by the preaching of the word, our doubts are resolved—our fears scattered—our hopes revived—the prospect of the heavenly world brightened—more clear evidence of interest in it, and assurance of enjoying of it obtained. The world has a native tendency to promote all this. And by the grace of the Spirit, souls who constantly attend on it, will be sure to find the sweet experience of all this.

MARCH 1.

That also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad. John 11:52.

These words are like Sampson's riddle, which, some read thus: "Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from that which is violent, or fierce." (Judges 14:14.) Caiaphas the high-priest, though a devourer of Jesus, yet holds forth precious food; though violent and fierce against Christ, yet he delivers sweet truth. Truth is truth, though from the tongue of an enemy: yea, it is a double confirmation of truth. If Christ be preached, let us rejoice, though even by bad men, and from bad principles. Judas preached; the Holy Ghost causes this wicked high-priest, to prophecy of Jesus. By these words, the Holy Ghost plainly instructs us in these precious truths.— O that we may receive them in love! (1st.) That though the whole world is become guilty before God, yet he has a peculiar, chosen number, who are here called, "*the children of God.*" They were not so by nature, but children of wrath, even as others. But God "predestinated them unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. 1:5.) Simply to believe this, is to bow to the will of God; to object to it, is to cavil against God's good pleasure, as well as his mercy. (2d.) These children are all scattered abroad. Every one of them is turned to his own way of cursed sin, and shameful folly. They delight in their distance from God: they hate the knowledge of God, and are at enmity against his law. They say unto God, "Depart, depart! we desire not the knowledge of thee." They sport themselves in their own delusions: they would fill up the

measure of iniquity, till their souls dropped into hell. But (3d.), They are to be gathered into *one*. O, the amazing mercy! the astonishing grace of this! Christ is this blessed *One*. He, like a good shepherd, gathers his poor, scattered, lost sheep unto himself. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10.) "He gathereth the outcasts." (Isa. 56:8.) "for they were given to him of the Father." (John 17:2.) Now, you are deeply concerned to know, what all the world care nothing about, whether you are a child of God or not? Here, it is come to a point. Has Christ gathered you? Has he called you by the grace of his word, and by the power of his Spirit, to come to him? Have you seen misery and destruction in yourself, and mercy and salvation in Christ? Can you say from your heart, 'Jesus! save me, or I perish?' If so, you are surely gathered by Christ; you are really a child of God, by faith in Christ. Let sin, Satan, and unbelief ever so much object against it, doubt not of it. Here are two little words, worth the study of your own life, *in one*. O! ever meditate upon the glory and blessedness of being *one in and with Jesus Christ*.

MARCH 2.

Thou God! seest me. Gen. 16:13.

"Why sayest thou, O trembling sinner! My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" The Lord here asks thy reason, and reproaches thy speech. (Isa. 40:27.) Look at Hagar, and be ashamed of the unbelieving surmises of thy heart. She was a dear child of God: yet she is left to suffer sore distresses. Her mistress treats her cruelly. She flees to a solitary wilderness: here was no eye of pity, no hand to relieve, no friend to comfort her: and, what must add to her sorrow and heighten her distress, she was with child. She fled from her station in providence. But the God of providence follows her,—the angel of the Lord—rather, the Lord, the Angel, the Messenger of the covenant—the Lord Jesus the Saviour. He found her, called her by name, inquires the cause of her distress, and bids her return to her mistress. Hagar knew her Saviour. She sets up a memorial of his sympathizing love for her, and care over her. She called the name of the Lord, who spake unto her, "*Thou, God! seest me.*" O, how much is implied in this! In every distress, remember this for thy comfort; and, in every perplexity, think of this for thy support, "*Thou God! seest me.*" Let this be the daily watch-word for thy soul. For it implies, (1st.) What the church says, "I was in his eyes, as one who found favour, or peace." (Song 8:10.) "Therefore, the eyes of the Lord are upon me, and his ears are open unto my prayers." (1 Pet. 3:12.) His loving eyes looked upon me, pitied me when I was polluted in my blood, and called me to enjoy his favour and his peace. But, (2d.) Have I got into a wilderness of

perplexity? Do I find one who can comfort me? Do I think I have deserted the Lord, and therefore he has deserted my soul? Still remember, "*Thou God! seest me.*" He sees the sorrows, marks the sighs, and hears the complaints of thy labouring breast, with an eye of sympathy, and a heart of love. "Our dear high-Priest is most tenderly touched with a feeling of our distress." (Heb. 4:15.) Therefore, he searches after and follows us, with this tender and compassionate call, "Return again to me." (Jer. 3:1.) "Come unto *me*, ye weary and heavy laden, I will give rest and refreshment to your souls." (Matt. 11:28.) (3d.) Is there sorrow in our hearts, for the folly of our ways? and this cry in our souls, "O! that it were with me, as in months that are past?" This is because the Lord sees us in mercy, comes after us in love, and hath not given us up in his wrath. And what says he? "I have seen his ways, and will"—what? damn him? O! no. O, the riches of grace!—"I will heal him." (Isa. 57:18.) Lastly, If *Thou God! seest me*, O! may I always live, as seeing thee by the eye of faith; live in thy service, walk in thy fear, unto thy glory.

MARCH 3.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Phil. 1:11.

He, who does not see himself stript of righteousness, his eyes were never yet opened, nor his heart convinced of sin by the Spirit of God. He, who imagines that he possesses an inherent righteousness of his own, in which he can stand before God, and answer all the demands of his holy law, deceives his own soul. He, who seeks to be made righteous, to be justified in God's sight, and to obtain a title to heaven, in any other way than the righteousness of Christ, rejects Christ, and disbelieves the Scripture. He, who does not delight in the fruits of righteousness, and desire to abound in them, and to be filled with them, is a stranger to our righteous Saviour, and destitute of the power of our most holy faith. Mind, (1st.) "*The fruits of righteousness.*" Why do we not always speak in scripture phrases, and use words which the Holy Ghost teaches? It is much easier to understand this phrase, "the fruits of righteousness," than that of inherent righteousness. Many people use it, but they neither know themselves, nor can they explain to others, what they mean by it. These school-terms have brought no honour to the plain, simple gospel of Christ; but have puzzled and misled simple Christians. Pray, mind how exceeding cautious St. Paul is in his phrase. (Rom. 6:16.) "Whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto"—What!—"Life?" The former antithesis seems to require it should be *unto life*; but St. Paul well knew what a legal, self-righteous spirit is in us, and how it works by pride; therefore, he cautiously avoids elating it. He says, of

“obedience unto righteousness,” not unto life. This is the obedience of faith. Hence, spring the fruits of righteousness. (2d.) These are *by Jesus Christ*, as he is *the Lord our Righteousness*. All the fruits of righteousness flow from our vital union to him, and communication from him through faith. (3d.) The end of them. They are not to satisfy God’s justice, obtain his mercy, or procure his favour; nor to fulfil his law, in order to get life thereby. If we think so, we shall be puffed up in our minds, reject our Saviour’s righteousness, do despite to the Spirit of his grace, who glorifies him; and, turning the eye of faith from him, trust in our own good fruits. But they are unto “*the glory and praise of God.*” To the glory of God, who has justified us freely, and will give us the kingdom, of his own good pleasure. O, Christian! here is the heavenly spring of all holy zeal, fervent obedience, and abounding in all fruits of righteousness. Pray, study, and strive, that you may excel, abound in them, and be filled with them. “For,” says our Lord, “herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” (John 15:18.)

MARCH 4.

The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. Psalm 125:3.

How shall we draw the line between the righteous and the wicked? How shall we distinguish them, seeing they are both alike the subjects of a wicked nature, derived from Adam the sinner, their father? The Holy Ghost does this. He sets a mark upon the righteous, by which they are essentially distinguished from the wicked, in the first verse of this Psalm: "*They trust in the Lord.*" The wicked trust in themselves, that they are righteous; trust in their own power, to make and keep themselves so; and hope for God's favour and heaven, because they are so. They trust in their own wisdom to guide them through life, and to their own goodness to make them happy in death. The righteous are stript of their righteousness: they are convinced of sin: they are poor, hopeless, desperate, and in a forlorn and wretched condition as to themselves. (Do you see somewhat of your own picture here?) They trust in the Lord Jesus, for righteousness to justify and entitle them to heaven, to cleanse them from sin; for wisdom, to guide; power to support; grace, to sanctify; and love, to bring them to glory. Now, these two sorts of persons are back to back; the face of one is towards heaven; the other, towards hell. They are of two seeds; there is enmity put between them. The wicked have always a rod for the back of the righteous. Ay! and they would lay it on with both hands, and always keep it upon their backs too. Though, for wise and gracious ends, the Lord permits this for a

season; yet he will not suffer it to rest there long. Wicked Saul was a scourge to righteous David; so was blaspheming Sennacherib to good Hezekiah: and says the church, "Thou caused men to ride over our heads." (Psalm 66:12.) Yet David came to the throne; Hezekiah and his people were unhurt by the Assyrians: and the church says, "We went through fire and water, but thou broughtest us into a wealthy place." Here is a reason why our Lord will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest on the righteous: "Lest he put forth his hand unto iniquity." We never suffer judgment, but mercy is in it. Our troubles are dealt to us by the hand of love: mercy is mixed with them all. The Lord knows the righteous is but frail: he remembers he is but dust, and liable to sin: he is wise to prevent this. When oppression and trials from the wicked bring us low, and make us cry to the Lord, then we honour his grace and his power, his truth and his love, by the affiance of our heart. "He will fulfil the desire of them who fear him; he also will hear their cry and will save them." (Psalm 145:9.)

MARCH 5.

Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. 1 Cor. 13:13.

It is a pity it was not rendered *love*, instead of charity, all through this chapter: it certainly would have been a means of preventing much error. Consider, (1st.) The abiding of *love*. It springs from faith and hope, and has no existence in the heart without them. We have no more love to God, than a beast, yea, than a devil has, till we believe his love to us, and hope in his promises made to us in Christ Jesus. We love him. Why? Because, merely of the glories and perfections of his nature, is he the object of our supreme love? No, but rather "because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) How has God manifested his love to us? In this: "Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (ver. 9.) But our hearts are strangers to this love, till we believe in Jesus, and hope in his salvation. Then the effect of love is produced from its original cause, the love of God. Then we live in love and walk in love, because we live a life of faith on the love of God. (2d.) But why is love greater than faith or hope? (1st.) Because it is the greatest proof of their existence. How can you prove you believe and hope in Christ without love? This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. Suppose you were called to be a martyr for Christ. You believe you can do all things, through Christ's strengthening you. You hope he will strengthen you. But if you so love him, as to suffer for him, you prove your faith and hope. (2d.) Love is the perfection, the rich and ripe fruit of faith and hope. Love is the very nature of God in the soul. For

God is love. Love makes our souls cheerful in the service of God and one another. What is life, even the life of faith and hope, without love? (3d.) Love will live and sing, when faith shall be lost in sight, and hope in fruition. Love includeth faith and hope. "For love believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things, endureth all things: it never faileth. (ver. 7, 8.) O my Lord, my Love, glory to thee that I do believe and hope in thee. Crown, O crown these blessed graces with more heavenly love. Love is of thee, and from thee. O so shed thy love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, that I may not only be a believing, hoping, but loving disciple of thine; that my soul may burn with a flame of love divine, to thee, and to my brethren. Then shall I assuredly live in the suburbs of glory, above the deceits of sin, Satan, and the world, for love is of God. (1 John 4:7.)

Lord, hast thou blest my soul with *love*?
My soul, which thee did hate?
And shall I sing thy praise above
When faith and hope abate?

Then make me watchful ev'ry hour,
To live and walk in love:
From sin's deceit and Satan's pow'r,
Lord, lift my soul above.

MARCH 6.

And that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. 2 Cor. 5:15.

Christ died for all, "whom the Father gave to him." (John 17:9.) Sooner or later, all these willingly and cheerfully come unto, or believe on Christ. Joyful to remember, we are drawn to Christ by the love of the Father, or else we never should have come to him. (John 6:44.) Now, we have done with working *for* life, and asking, what must we do to be saved? For now, we actually are *saved*, and really do *live*. (1st.) We are saved from the love of sin, from our natural hatred to the doctrines of grace, and from our aversion to full justification and final salvation by the word of Christ *only*. Legal self-righteous professors exclaim, 'Do not tell us of doctrines of grace, but of what we must do to be saved.' Truly, the way is plain: there is work enough for them to do. If they will enter into life by keeping the commandments, let them perfectly fulfil the law, and salvation is sure. So say they, no matter how you live; live as you like—your salvation is sure. This is very true. Salvation is not only possible, but sure and certain to every believer in Christ. And all such strive to live as they like. (2d.) *We live*—A life of faith on the Son of God: not under the legal threats and terrors of the law in our consciences, striving to pacify its wrath by fulfilling its commands, but perfectly justified from all its condemnation. We do not like to live and walk in our sinful lusts, to obey our depraved wills, to gratify our sensual affections, to live to sinful self at all; nor to righteous self neither. Our souls are

equally averse to sinful lusts, as to self-righteous pride. Both are opposite to the love and glory of our dear, once dead, but now risen Saviour. As by him we live, so to him we live. This is what we like and prefer above all things. Say, O my soul! is not this thy chief, thy one desire? We have no greater pleasure on earth than to walk in the truth. O, thou life of our souls! thou Jesus and our all! without thee we can do nothing: help us to consider, what a little while we have to live unto thee, and to glorify thee, before we shall live and reign with thee. Lord, in the belief of this, fire our hearts with a holy zeal for thy glory, unremitting diligence in thy service, and unwearied constancy in obeying thy will, "being ready to every good work." (Tit. 3:1.)

Christ died for us, that we should live
No more to self and sin:
This truth is precious to believe,
And makes us pure within.

O! may the love, the dying love,
Of Christ possess my soul,
By living faith to soar above,
And all my pow'rs control!

MARCH 7.

O visit me with thy salvation. Psalm 106:4.

There is no good obtained by paying trifling visits, and receiving trifling visitors. The soul that is alive to God, will refrain from such an impertinent way of sacrificing its time. "Christ hath redeemed us from our vain conversation." (1 Pet. 1:18.) Our grand business is, to be looking at, glorying in, and talking of his righteousness, and his salvation all the day long. This was David's practice. If we followed it more, we too should say with him, "My lips shall greatly rejoice, and my soul which thou hast redeemed." (Psalm 71:23.) As our joy in Jesus increases, carnal, impertinent acquaintance will forsake us. Here is the cry of a convinced sinner, of a truly gracious heart, *O visit me with thy salvation.* This is a blessed frame of soul. Lord help us to consider it, and animate us to live to thee. Here is spiritual sight, and spiritual feeling. What is a Christian without these? Truly sunk into a state of dead formality. (1st.) Spiritual sight. The poor sinner sees himself totally ruined, and must be eternally miserable, for any thing he can do to save himself. Sin has destroyed him, and the law of God curses him. But he sees that Christ has perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered its curse, and eternally satisfied inexorable justice. Thus is salvation finished. In the firm belief of this he prays, *visit me*, even *me*, a desperate sinner in myself, with the joys and comforts of thy salvation. O Jesus, I cannot be content with hearing of salvation, with seeing it is for sinners, with believing it is everlastingly finished for them, without tasting the joys, and feeding upon the comforts of it in my own soul. For, (2d.) Here is spiritual *feeling*. Laugh on,

deride as you please, ye unquickened multitude, at the bitter, sweet feelings of living souls. We feel our misery as sinners—we groan being burdened with a body of sin and death—we cry out, O wretched that we are, who shall deliver us? But blessed be God, that prayer of the Church of England, at the Visitation of the Sick, is answered upon us: “We *know* and *feel* that there is none other name under heaven, given to men, in whom, and through whom, we may receive health and salvation, but *only* the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the sweet feeling of faith. Therefore in faith we cry, visit *me*, miserable *me*, with thy salvation, Lord Jesus. Make me to feel the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. O shed the love of God abroad in my heart. The Lord keep our souls in this believing, praying, loving, feeling frame below, till we come to full fruition above, rejoicing that we are made “wise unto salvation.” (2 Tim. 3:15.)

In the firm faith of sacred truth,
O may I e'er abide,
Expecting God's refreshing love,
Tho' foes do me deride.

The precious visits of thy grace,
Grant me, dear Lord, to prove
In this forlorn and wretched state,
To fit me for above.

MARCH 8.

The holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 3:13.

We never think to any purpose about salvation, till we see our own condemnation for sin. Has there ever been a tribunal set up in your conscience? Have you been arraigned, and have you held up your hand at the bar of justice? Has the law of God brought its charge against you? Have you, from inward conviction of sin, been forced to plead *guilty*? Then the law pronounces its curses upon you, and there it leaves you, under its guilt and terror. For, to convince and to condemn, is all the law can do. The Lord knows, and self-condemned sinners know too, (I speak for one,) this is a most deplorable state. Now, the once neglected book of God becomes most precious to the soul. The believing sinner now sees, as he had no knowledge of sin, but by the law, so he can obtain no knowledge of salvation, but by the gospel. Such a soul is wise; but not in his own eyes. Prudent; but not in his own sight. There is a woe against such as are, (Isa. 5:21.) And Christ thanks his Father that "he had hid the things of his kingdom, from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11:25.) O it is blessed to be only a babe in our own sight; to know that we have no wisdom in ourselves; to be stript of all our corrupt ideas of salvation; to see that we must learn all from the scriptures; and simply receive and believe what they testify of salvation by Jesus. This is true wisdom. This is being wise unto salvation. Now, if you closely attend to, and examine the cause, why your walk is not always holy, happy, and joyful, you will find it is because of

your folly. You do not simply search the scriptures for wisdom, nor simply believe the salvation they reveal, which is in Christ. The scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation. But say you, cannot the Spirit do this without them? This is folly. The Spirit is in the word. It teaches us to be wise unto salvation, by the word. If you expect the Spirit without the word, you have the vain hope of a fool. *Through faith in Christ Jesus.* The scriptures testify of him, and of salvation by him *only*. To believe the scriptures, is to believe in Christ unto salvation. O say some, I do from my heart believe the scriptures, but I fear I have no saving faith in Christ. Here you are not a babe. Not simple of heart. You did not learn this from the scriptures. You get into the reasoning of the father of lies. So you distress your mind. Take thy Lord's reproof: "O fools and slow of heart to believe (what?) all that is *spoken*." Luke 24:25.

Vain men, who seek to be made wise
Without God's holy word:
Neglecting faith in Jesus Christ,
Ye ne'er can know the Lord.

Come listen to the scripture's voice,
Its sacred truths obey,
With wisdom then ye shall rejoice,
In Christ the only way.

MARCH 9.

This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise. Isa. 42:21.

What says the world, of God's new formed creatures? "These men turn the world upside down." (Acts 17:6.) Well, if they do, is it not right? Seeing the devil by sin turned it upside down once, Christ, by the power of his grace, turned it upside down again, then it is turned into its right state. The Lord is here about to perform a wonder of grace. He calls for our special attention to it. "*Behold*, I will do a new thing." (ver. 19.) He was going to take those who were not a people, to make them his people. The eminent displays of God's grace, should be the admiration of our hearts, and the glory of our souls. See (1st.) the description of this people. They are compared to the beasts of the field, to dragons and owls. Yet the Lord calls them "*my people, my chosen.*" My soul, remember what thy nature is. As filthy as a beast, as fierce as a dragon, as stupid as an owl. Was the earth at its first creation, without form, and void of order? (Gen. 1:2.) Just so respecting spiritual things, are all the subjects on whom the Lord displays the power of his grace. View thy nature. Come down from thy altitudes. Live in the valley of humiliation. Adore the power that formed thee. Confess the hand divine. For, (2d.) the Lord forms such. Till this is effected, we are only formed to serve our lusts, enjoy the pleasures of sense and sin, and to be slaves of Satan. What hand have we in our spiritual formation? Just as much as the earth had, in forming itself into order and beauty out of a rude mass of chaos and confusion. Well might St. Paul say, "We are his workmanship,

created in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:10.) Settle this well in thy mind, to quell the rising of cursed free-will pride, which robs the Lord of the glory of his efficacious grace. (3d.) See the end of the Lord's work of grace upon sinners. (1st.) "Formed for myself." How precious is that word. Formed to come unto God, enjoy fellowship with him, and live upon the fulness of the grace of Christ. Yea, to choose the Lord for our portion, and delight in him as our ALL, in time and eternity. (2d.) "They shall shew forth my praise." Lord fill our hearts with such a sense of thy distinguishing grace to us, that thy name may be ever praised by us. O may we ever praise thee, with the love of our hearts, and the obedience of our lives, who hath called us out of nature's darkness, into the marvellous grace of Christ.

We're all alike destroyed by sin,
And sunk into a hell of woe.
But sov'reign grace renews within,
Hence peace and love with comfort flow.

Sing, O ye saints! this matchless grace,
Flows from our Father's endless love,
Thro' Christ, unto our ruin'd race,
To raise our souls to joys above.

Equal praise to thee, O Spirit,
Our souls are ever bound to give:
By thy pow'r we now inherit
Our all in Christ and on him live.

MARCH 10.

All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. John 6:37.

By how many ways does Satan gain advantage over us? Though he cannot engage us in his drudgery, as cooks and scullions in a kitchen, yet he often employs us, to nurse those peevish, deformed, ill-favoured brats, corrupt reason, unbelief, slavish fear, etc. And he gives us no other wages for our service, but distress, dejection, and discontent. O ye children of God, instead of nursing such a vile brood, why do you not rather poison them by divine truths, and dash them in pieces in divine promises, flowing from God's everlasting love to you. Mark the process of it. (1st.) Because the Lord loved you, he gave you to his Son. This implies some secret transaction between God the Father, and his Son Jesus, in covenant purposes. ALL, whom the Father loved with an everlasting love, and chose in the morning of eternity, he committed into Christ's hands, to be saved by him, with an everlasting salvation. Came the Son of God from heaven upon an uncertainty? Died the Lamb of God, as a fool dieth, to no fixed end or purpose? No, he died to redeem, he rose to justify, he ever lives to save, ALL whom the Father *hath* given him, etc. (verse 39.) Believest thou this? Yes, says a poor sinner, and I tremble, lest I should not be one of this blessed number. You have reason to tremble, if you have not come to Christ. For, (2d.) he saith, "they ALL *shall* come to me." What! as dragged by the hair of their heads? So some impiously sneer at the doctrine of efficacious grace. No, but they come willingly and cheerfully to Christ, as drawn by the bands of

love, and the cords of reason. We see ourselves in all the filth of sin, in utter ruin and distress; feel guilt in our consciences, the curse of the law on our heads, self despair in our hearts, and with this cry in our mouth, Save, Lord, or I perish. I am lost, but thou hast died. There is no Saviour, no salvation but in thee. I believe this, and come to thee. Is this thy case? Then rejoice, thou wast given to Christ, by the Father in eternity, and the Spirit hath quickened thee, to come to Christ in time. Hear what our dear Saviour saith of such, (3d.) "I will in no wise cast out." This blessed negative is the strongest affirmative! This precious word has been a sheet-anchor to many a soul, in storms of distress. *In no wise*. Though black as hell, deformed as a devil by sin, yet whenever such a soul comes to me, my loving heart will most freely receive, my gracious arms most cordially embrace, my precious blood perfectly cleanse, my glorious righteousness everlastingly justify, and I will for ever save him to the uttermost. Heb. 7:25.

Thy words, dear Lord, have won my soul,
So full of love and grace:
They conquer all my prejudice.
And lead me to thy face.

God says they all shall surely come,
Drawn by my Spirit's pow'r;
The Saviour saith, I will receive
E'en at the latest hour.

MARCH 11.

Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 2 Cor. 13:5.

Happy for ministers, when their mission from Christ is called in question, they can appeal to their people's hearts, to prove that Christ is spoken to them. Happy for Christians, to examine, prove, and know themselves, and to find Christ is in them. Ignorance of ourselves lies at the bottom of all error, and self deceit. Lord help us deeply to consider of this important question. (1st.) Know ye not your own selves? Come you are very ready to judge ministers, find fault with them, and call their gifts and graces in question. Look at home. Know yourselves. Be not puffed up. Consider yourselves. Be humble. Your hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Your nature is totally corrupt and abominable. In your flesh dwelleth no good thing. Its motions are, to bring forth fruit unto death. Its lustings are, continually unto sin. Know, there is no difference in your nature, from that of the most vile and abandoned sinner upon the face of the earth. If left to yourselves, there is not the most atrocious sin, but you might commit. There is not a hell in which others are eternally suffering for sin, but what you justly deserve, and would fall into. For your sinful nature is as reprobate, corrupt, and adulterate as others, even as the most vile. Yea, and your state is also by nature, as bad as others, even *children of wrath*. Know ye not your own selves? Has the Spirit of truth made you thus acquainted with yourselves? Be not afraid to see and know the very worst of yourselves. For. (2d.) "Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you,

except ye be reprobates?" Blessed distinction! In this the elect differ from the reprobate. The former have Christ in them. The latter reject Christ, and are without any true knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him. What is implied in Christ being in us? (1st.) Dwelling in our hearts by faith. A clear knowledge of him, cordially receiving him, heartily believing on him, stedfastly cleaving to him, constantly abiding in him, steadily looking to him, as he is revealed in the word, the righteousness of sinners, the atonement for the guilty, justification for the ungodly, and the Saviour of the hopeless, helpless, and desperate. Therefore, (2d.) He is precious, as being suitable to us, in his glorious person, and his blessed offices. Hence our hearts go after him, our affections are placed on him, and it is the desire and delight of our souls, to honour, serve, and obey him. Thus self knowledge, and the knowledge of Christ, are the very criterion of salvation. O that we may sink into the depths of the deepest humility by the one, and rise into the heights of the highest comfort, peace and joy by the other. So shall we prove, that we have true Christian experience of the love and grace of Christ.

MARCH 12.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4:15.

There is much good or much harm done, by public preaching and private speaking. See to it, Christians. It either makes souls grow up in self-love, self-righteousness, and self-complacency; or to grow quite out of all conceit with themselves, and to grow up into Christ in all things. Vain persons, who think themselves very handsome, are peculiarly fond of looking at themselves in a glass that flatters or deceives them. If they see a disgustful spot, or blemish in their face, their vanity prompts them to give it some better name than it deserves, that it may not bring down their high opinion of their own beauty. This is the exact case with those who are grown up in themselves, in a high conceit of their own senseless* perfection. If a spot or blemish of sin appear, O, that is only an infirmity: they do not call these things sin. But, one loud peal of thunder, one dreadful flash of lightning from Mount Sinai, would make them say with David, "I have seen an end of all perfection." (Psa. 119:96.) And with St. Paul, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived (it seems, sin was fallen into a dead swoon, but the law revived it) and I died." (Rom. 7:9.) Then St. Paul was glad to speak the truth, in love; to love the truth, as it is in Jesus; to grow out of conceit with himself, and to grow up into Christ in all things. O this is blessed growing. Lord make our souls thus increase, with all the increase of God. Into Christ: In a greater knowledge of his glorious person, more experience of his humbling grace,

stronger exercise of faith in him, hope towards him, love to him, patience, resignation and self-denied obedience to his blessed word and will. *In all things*. Christ has redeemed us from *all* iniquity, and justified us from *all things*. Faith works by the love of this, to universal obedience. For Christ *is the Head*. Ever remember this, and be humble. Firmly believe this, and be joyful. He is, (1st.) the head of influence. You can have no grace to strengthen you; no righteousness to justify you: no holiness to sanctify you: no love of the Father to bless you: no Spirit to comfort you, but in and from him. The body is nourished from the head; so are all Christ's members. (2d.) He is the head of eminence, to protect you from every evil enemy and danger, till he bring you safe to his glory. Know, that all this comfort and blessedness is enjoyed in the faith of Christ, "*who is the truth*." John 14:6.

* The Printer set *senseless* for *sinless*—as he could not have found a better epithet, I let it go so.

MARCH 13.

Only believe. Mark 5:36.

A short answer to a case of great distress. A simple recipe from the greatest physician. A grand catholicon, or universal remedy that suits all cases, states, and circumstances, and is seasonable at all times. Look at this history. Look to the author of faith to profit by it. Here is a ruler falls at Christ's feet, beseeching help for his daughter, who is at the point of death. Jesus went with him. Before he arrives at the house, news is brought that the child is dead. The Lord of life and death forbids the father's fears. *Be not afraid.* He encourages his hope: *Only believe.* Fears are natural to sinners. Faith expels them. Christ restores her to life. Joyful news for us. (1st.) Here is precious encouragement for our faith, in every application to Christ. For, (2d.) here is a marvellous display of his great love, ready will, and almighty power, to help and relieve us. He not only restores at the last gasp, but, when life is departed, recalls it. If your soul is alive to God, you have experienced this. It was dead to sin. Christ quickened you. Now he is your life, how are you to walk and enjoy the comfort of this? *Only believe.* How many hearts heave with indignation against this doctrine? How many taunt at us? "O you are all for faith—nothing but faith—only believe." True, we are all for Christ, nothing but Christ, only Christ. And we can enjoy him only by believing. He reproves our slowness of heart to believe, as our greatest folly. (Luke 24:25.) All our comfort flows from faith; all our misery from unbelief. Bring this to a point. Are we groaning under the burden of inbred sin, vexed with sore temptations? Do we feel the accusations

of conscience, fear the terrors of a broken law, see the drawn sword of justice in the hand of a sin-avenging God, and tremble at the solemn thoughts of death and judgment? Under all this, what can bring relief to our conscience, hope to our mind, and peace to our soul? *Only believe* that Christ hath redeemed, justified, and will eternally glorify us. This is death to our fears, and life to our joys. Again, how is the life of holiness maintained? *Only believe*, that walking in fellowship with Christ infinitely exceeds all the pleasures of sin, the joys of sense, and the happiness of the world. Faith elevates the soul above all this, and causes it to look down with a holy contempt upon it. Faith enjoys Christ, that is heaven in the heart. In this stedfast faith we are to resist Satan, (1 Pet. 5:9.) and overcome the world. 1 John 5:4.

“Only believe: Lord, give the pow’r
To look to thee in ev’ry hour,
When sorrow, need, and sore distress,
On our dejected spirits press.

Faith brings all glory to the Lord,
It trusts his pow’r, believes his word:
It lifts dejected spirits up,
When call’d to drink the bitter cup.

MARCH 14.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Psa. 56:3.

A Christian's fears commence with his joys. Being new-born, he is the subject of new joys and new fears also: and, glory to grace! he has a new object too to trust in—a covenant God in Christ, who is unchangeable in his love. Confidence in him is the sovereign antidote against dejecting fears. Fears, that the world know not of, beset holy saints. (1st.) They find and feel their hearts to be superlatively deceitful, and desperately wicked. They dread their corruptions, more than all the men on earth, or devils in hell: they are afraid lest some vile lust, cursed corruption or devilish temptation should prevail, so as to offend their Lord, wound their conscience, and bring a reproach upon that holy name, whereby they are called. This is a godly fear; it can do the soul no harm: it is for its good: it keeps it humble and self-diffident, and causes it to say, "I will trust in thee." "Do," saith the Saviour; "My grace is sufficient for thee: my strength is made perfect in thy weakness: my power shall prevail over thy wickedness."

(2d.) They may be afraid, after all their delightful hopes, of living and reigning with Jesus in glory; that, through the pressure of a body of sin and death, the snares and devices of Satan, the allurements of the world, etc., they may come short and perish at last. They may fear, lest, after they have spun the last thread, they should perish on the shore, in sight of glory. But they may boldly and confidently say, "I will trust in thee." For here is a most precious three-fold cord which can never be broken. Thus saith Jesus, (1st.) "I give unto my

sheep eternal life." (2d.) "They shall never perish." (3d.) "None shall pluck them out of my hands." (John 10:28.) I thank thee, my dear Lord! this has been a sheet-anchor to my soul in many a dreadful storm.

(3d.) We may be afraid of that terrible monster—Death! But Christ has conquered him for us. Trust in the Lord, brings perfect victory over him, and joyful triumph against him: so that we can say, "O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:55.) Faith makes a bridge over the river of death. But,

(4th.) Says a poor sinner, 'I am not afraid of being damned in hell, but of starving on earth.' But, saith he, "Trust in the Lord, and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm 32:3.

How many are the fears
Which exercise my mind!
But God is nigh, his grace appears:
From this, support I find.

O! teach my soul the art
All times to trust in thee:
For, O, how gracious is thy heart!
In love it bled for me.

MARCH 15.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. 2 Cor. 7:7.

“Cleanse ourselves!” What! was holy Paul the subject of filthiness? Yes: he, as well as the holy saints of Corinth, constantly wanted cleansing, by the blood of Christ. St. Paul, again and again, declares against the proud notion of sinless perfection. He well knew, that regenerating grace and adopting love, do not entirely destroy the infection of our nature; but hereby being brought into a holy state, we are set above the power of sin. We hate the defilement of it; and we ever have the precious blood of the Lamb to have recourse to, for cleansing from it. “The Son of God has made us free indeed.” (John 8:36.) Free from the slavery of sin, and the bondage of the law: free, to come to him, that we may wash our garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you see and lament that you are the subject of internal, as well as external filthiness? Should you not be ashamed, that your fellow Christians should know what filthy and abominable thoughts pass through your mind? Are they not the grief of your very soul? The Lord knows them all: he has provided, and set open, a precious fountain for sin and uncleanness. (Zech. 13:1.) Believe his love; take the benefit of his Son’s blood; come freely, come daily, come constantly to it by faith; wash and be clean. See the reason of this: “Having these promises.” O! consider how great and precious they are. (1st.) Of being temples of the living God. (2d.) Of his indwelling presence. (3d.) Of his being our God, and we

his sons and daughters. (4th.) Of God's receiving us, and owning us as such, whenever we come to him. Most powerful motives for cleansing! See, believers! your precious privileges. We are not called upon, and urged to cleanse ourselves, by the terrors of the law, on pain of damnation. No! but as loving children, in a state of salvation, under a covenant of love and grace. Nothing but great and precious promises await us, from the love of God our Father, from the grace of God our Redeemer, and from the witness of God our Sanctifier: and it is by these we are animated and excited to cleansing and purification. Would it not be a scandal and a shame to an earthly monarch, for his children to appear in filthy garments, associate with the low and vulgar of his subjects, and give in to their practices? O! ye sons and daughters of the King of kings, consider your dignity; act up to your high station; adorn your profession; walk worthy of your God!

Lord I've daily need of cleansing
By thy most precious blood:
Filthiness of flesh and spirit
Cleave to my ev'ry good.

Now I'm in thy new creation,
O, cleanse and keep me clean!
Jesus, thou art my salvation
Purge me from ev'ry stain.

MARCH 16.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor. 7:1.

Who are thus exhorted? saints in Christ. What for? To labour to get perfect holiness, to obtain the favour of God? No: they are already perfectly justified in his sight, and sanctified to his glory. But some reject this: they legalize the gospel, (if I may so speak) under a specious shew for holiness, as though that was to procure more for us from God, than the blood and righteousness of his dear Son. This is aiming to perfect holiness, in ignorance and unbelief: this eclipses the glory of Christ's work for us, inverts the order of gospel economy, and brings perplexity and distress upon God's children. For, this is the glory of the gospel,—that moment a sinner is justified by the faith of Christ, he is sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Our title to heaven, and our meetness for glory, come together by the same rich grace: being brought into the sense of God's favour, we have also suitable dispositions to enjoy him. What then? Are we to be idle in the Christian life; to live and walk according to the course of this world, fulfilling our carnal lusts? No: those who do, have no reason to think they possess a holy faith in a holy Jesus, or that a holy God is their Father in Christ. Saint of God, thou art called to perfect holiness in the fear of God. (1st.) How is this to be done? by living a life of faith on the Son of God, who came to destroy the works of sin and Satan, and to conform us to the image of God. We are daily to look to Christ, to be made sanctification in us, as well as righteousness to us. We have daily sins to be subdued, graces to be exercised, and duties to be performed. Only the grace of Christ is sufficient for us; and by that we

are enabled to go on, perfecting holiness. It is a constant, progressive work. No one is perfect in holiness. Every saint is going on *perfecting* it, to the end of his life, in the holy, loving fear of the Lord. (2d.) Why is this to be done? It is our calling: we must follow it as our daily employ. The more holiness from Christ, the more happiness with him. It brings honour and glory to Christ: it proves that his religion is of a holy nature; that we possess a holy faith; and that it works by the *love* of Christ, in holy love to him. So it puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men, by living down their carnal objection, That the doctrine of absolute, unconditional salvation leads to licentiousness. Yet, (3d.) here is no room for legal boasting of our holiness. For "the Lord worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13.) In all that we are and do, we are to follow after holiness. "Holiness to the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses." Zech. 14:20.

Lord, daily teach me, more and more,
The way to joy and bliss,
That all who reach the heav'nly shore,
Must walk in holiness.

O! let thy fear dwell in my heart,
Lest I should thee offend,
And from thy holy ways depart
And hold not to the end.

MARCH 17.

Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die: believest thou this? John 11:26.

Under great declining of strength, dejection of spirits, and in consideration of the near approach of death, these precious words of our dear dying Lord were brought to my mind: they were as a comforting, reviving, draught to my spirits. Lord! I bless thee for them. O, my soul! dwell on them. Am I a sinner, born to die? Is death the wages of sin? Must these eyes, which now read thy precious sayings, be soon closed by death? Must the hand, which now directs this pen, be shortly still and motionless? Yet dost thou, my Lord, say, "Living and believing in thee, I shall never die?" Dost thou ask me, "Believest thou this?" "Lord, thou knowest all things!" knowest, that, by thy grace, I can say, "*Thou art the Son of God:*"—thou hast fulfilled thine own promise, "O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hosea 13:14.) "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:54.) "Shall never die." Death has lost his terrific appearance; he is changed from a substance into a *shadow*. (Psa. 23:4.) Only children and fools are afraid of a shadow. Glory to thee, my Lord! that I am a man of understanding, and by thee am made "wise unto salvation." Death has lost both his sting and his strength. Sin is atoned for: the law is fulfilled. I believe in thee, O Jesus! Who hath done both for the victory. 'Tis mine: I have it in possession. Thy word cannot fail: thou hast said, "I shall never die." The terrors of death are changed into the sweet composure of sleep. I shall soon fall into this precious rest—sleep in thee! Thou shalt soon wipe away all tears from

mine eyes; I shall awake with thee, and sin and sorrow shall be no more for ever. O! well mayest thou ask, "Believest thou this?" For in the faith of this, consists all my comfort, which results from loving thee, and glorifying thee in life and death.

"Faith works by love." It works by the Father's everlasting love, in giving his only Son to be our Saviour: it works by the precious love of thee, thou sin-atoning, law-fulfilling, justice-satisfying, death-conquering Son of God!—it works by the love of thee, thou soul-renewing, faith-begetting, sin-subduing Spirit of holiness and truth! This is the given principle of love, which faith springs from, lives upon, and works by. Here faith is all in all. For it brings Christ and all his victories into the heart, puts death, and every enemy, under our feet; silences all Satan's accusations, and all legal condemnations. "This is the victory, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.)

O soul-reviving joy of faith,
Which lives upon my Saviour's word!
It triumphs o'er the power of death,
Possess'd of vic'try in my Lord.

Christ lives and says, I ne'er shall die;
His word I'm sure he will fulfil:
He's truth itself, he cannot lie,
And death is subject to his will.

MARCH 18.

Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. 1 John 3:21.

A text misapplied, is like a bone out of joint, which puts the body to pain. This text may have such an effect upon the soul. For what poor sinner is there upon earth, but his heart must condemn him for coming short of God's glory, and perfect obedience of his holy law? Must he therefore give up his confidence towards God? Yes, if we so understand the text. But surely this was not the apostle's design: for this would effectually destroy love to God, and distress his poor children's souls, by taking away the comfort of faith, that, "there is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.) What meaneth he then? Plainly to establish our hearts in the faith of God's love to us in Christ, and from this love experienced in the heart, in love to our brethren in Christ. This is an experienced truth—if faith and love abate, our hearts condemn us, and our confidence towards God grows weak. In proportion to our lively faith and warm love, confidence towards God is strong. (1st.) As to *faith*.—The apostle calls on us, verse 1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Now, are you beholding, believing, and living upon this stupendous love of God in Christ? Are you dwelling upon it? Does it engage your attention? Does it captivate your affections? Does it swallow up the low, mean, inordinate love of the world? If not, your heart will condemn you. Your confidence in God will abate; you will not delight in him with the affection of a child, nor draw nigh to him with joyful

gladness, as to your loving Father. So, (2d.) Of *love*. Love to the brethren of Christ, the apostle is here treating of. Lively faith in Christ ever begets warm love to our brethren. Then, we have strong confidence towards God, that he is our loving Father, and we are his obedient children. But if love be wanting, our hearts will smite and reproach us, and confidence in God forsake us. See hence, that all our comforts spring from our confidence towards God; and all our distress, from our hearts condemning us for want of faith and love. O! let us cry to the blessed Spirit, to enable us to live more upon the love, the matchless, everlasting, unchangeable love of God to us in Christ Jesus. Let us be thankful that he has given us feeling hearts, which are not like those of the wicked, hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: but are tender, to feel the least condemnation. And when our hearts condemn us, let us flee to our great High-priest, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Heb. 4:15.

My heart doth oft condemn,
When God condemneth not:
He justifies me in the Lamb,
And all my sins doth blot.

But still he bids me care
To walk in faith and love,
In him and to his children dear,
And taste his joys above.

MARCH 19.

Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. 10:12.

Formal professors of his name are called the Lord's people, as well as those who are possessors of his love. The former for want of love to God, have no zeal for his glory. Hence, they are careless of their walk, and are liable to fall from the height of a towering profession, into the bottomless pit of perdition. Possessors of God's love are also liable to fall, though not out of the hands of Christ into hell, yet into many things which may wound their souls, bring a hell into their consciences, a dishonour on the name and gospel of Christ, and give the enemies thereof an occasion to blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called. O, Christians! see to your standing. You are called upon, as you love your dear Saviour, as you value the peace of God, and the comfort of your souls, "To take heed lest you fall." Be not high-minded, but fear. You stand by faith. The dreadful falls of others are set before us for ensamples, types, or patterns of the awful judgment of God against sin; and as a warning to us, to beware that we fall not as they did. (1st.) Into idolatry. O! beware of sacrificing your precious time and attention to lying vanities: any thing that takes your heart from God, is an idol: mixing with the wicked and profane, to partake of their carnal joys, is a species of idolatry. You in effect say, I cannot find complete happiness in my God; therefore, I seek it here. Covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3:5.) A covetous man seeks that in his gold, which can only be enjoyed in God: be sure, the anger of the Lord will smoke against such. (2d.) "Fornication." O! beware

of this gross sin of the flesh, and also of spiritual fornication against your Lord Christ. (3d.) "They tempted Christ." O, beware how you distrust the grace, power, and faithfulness of Christ to keep you and comfort you, so as to withdraw your faith in him, hope on him, and prayer to him; or tempt him, by presuming on his power to keep you, in the midst of snares and temptations you wilfully run into. (4th.) "They murmured." O! watch against a spirit of dissatisfaction, with the dispensations of Providence, and the displays of grace. The pride of our nature is prone to find fault with both. What caused all this? Why, (5th.) "They lusted after evil things." This is the source and spring of every sin. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:15.) What is the sovereign antidote against all this? Standing in and walking by the faith of the Son of God. This brings fellowship with God. Hence, lust is killed in the heart, that it cannot break out into sin in the life. "Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Pet. 4:7.)

MARCH 20.

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. 1 Cor. 4:20.

It is the wisdom of a Christian to improve from the various objects he meets with. See we an open, profane sinner? beware of looking down upon him with Pharisaic pride, and supercilious contempt: behold in him your wicked nature! Remember, grace alone made the difference: be humble: adore the God of grace. See we only the form of godliness in any? St. Paul tells us how to act: "From such turn away." (2 Tim. 3:5.) You will get no good from them. There is little hope of doing good to them: leave them. Why so? Because they are strangers to the vital power of godliness, and destitute of the inward experience of the grace of Christ upon their souls. True, they may make a great shew; have vast zeal for the interest of a party; be very warm and violent for the form of sound words, a consistent plan of doctrine, and a set of Scripture notions. But, yet, after all, it is but the notion and form of things, which float in their heads, and swim on the surface of their understandings. Their hearts are dead to the love of Christ, but alive to the love of the world. They join the men of the world in their contemptuous sneer upon the power of self-denying godliness; and in irreligious banter upon those, who separate themselves from the ungodly and profane, and live and walk under the influence of spiritual feelings and experience. All this they account precise folly, and condemn as rank enthusiasm. Have you the power of godliness? Is Christ the power of God in your heart? Is your soul alive to him? Is your body the temple of the Holy Ghost? Does God dwell in you, and delight over you? Is it your daily

delight to study the word, rely upon the promises, taste the grace, feel the power, feed upon the comfort, and live upon the fulness of the love of Christ? What have you to do with the men who are content with mere form, shadow, and notion; and are strangers to the power of all this? Catch the infection of their secure spirit, you may: by such, the keen edge of your spiritual affections may be blunted: you may be drawn to lie supinely down by them, and get into spiritual slumber with them. But of all men, there is the least hope of these rising from their security, running the heavenly race with you, and of being spiritually profitable to you. Think of this, and turn from them. Know your danger: though not of losing your soul, yet of losing the life, comfort, and power of godliness. O! what is a Christian without this? How comfortless the moments! how dejecting the hours! how distressing the days! how doleful the nights—without experiencing the power of Christ! Yea, what is life itself, without the experience of his grace and love?

MARCH 21.

And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? 2 Sam. 9:8.

Old love cannot be forgotten: it makes such deep, and leaves such lasting impressions on the mind, which time itself cannot efface. This was verified in David and Jonathan. The latter is dead; yet love to his memory lives in David's heart. Hence, he enquires after the remains of his family, to shew kindness unto them. Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, is introduced to the king: he thus expresses the affection of his royal heart to him, "Fear not; I will surely shew kindness to thee, for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Had any of David's subjects a right to arraign, and call him to an account, for this sovereign act of favour? Which of them would dare to say unto him, What doest thou? But yet proud hearts rise with indignation, and utter their horrid speeches, against the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, for dispensing his free favour and rich grace, which he owes to none, to whom he pleases. See how Mephibosheth is affected. Struck with astonishment, he bows with humility, and rates himself *a dead dog!* totally undeserving such signal favours. Generous love, in freely bestowing unmerited mercies, sinks reflecting minds into deep humility and self-abasement. O that God's free grace to us in Jesus, may so affect us! Did such love dwell in David's heart to all who belonged to Jonathan? Then, (1st.) here is a picture of the everlasting, infinite, and immutable love of God

to all who belong to *Jesus*. Jonathan signifies, the gift of the Lord: this, Christ is to us. (2d.) Did David enquire after them? so God sends his Spirit, to seek us. "Thou shalt be called, sought out." (Isa. 62:12.) (3d.) Was Mephibosheth lame in his feet? we are so crippled by sin, that we cannot run the way of God's commandments. Yet, (4th.) says David, "Fear not:" so saith our God, "Fear not; I have called thee by thy name,"—a sinner. (Isa. 43:1.) (5th.) Says David, "I will surely shew kindness to thee:" "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord." (Isa. 54:8.) (6th.) "I will restore thee all thy father's land:" "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (7th.) "Thou shalt eat bread continually:" we are appointed to eat bread at our Lord's table in his kingdom. (Luke 22:29, 30.) (8th.) Why is all this? "For Jonathan thy father's sake." O, sinner! be it known unto thee, all these favours, in time and to eternity, are bestowed upon thee for Jesus, the Son of God's sake, *only*. Now, what say you to all this? Will you not fall down and own, I am as a dead dog, and deserve to be as a damned devil? "But grace reigns." (Rom. 5:21.)

MARCH 22.

The Father seeketh such to worship him. John 4:23.

Error is natural to fallen man. He sets his face against truth, and turns his back upon it with contempt. The more error abounds with pride and self-sufficiency, so much the more it is suited to our corrupt nature. Hence, we are naturally Pelagians: we cannot think Adam's sin has hurt us. Or else, Semi-pelagians: though we confess our souls are wounded by Adam's sin, yet we cannot think we are totally dead to God thereby; but, as it were, only half dead: so that we still possess some power and ability, to seek God and to please him, if we will but exert ourselves. This is the popular doctrine of our day: it is suited to man's pride, and keeps up his self-importance. Hence, this dry, shriveled comment is put upon our Lord's words: "That, if we will but stir up ourselves to seek God, possess our minds with an habitual sense of religion, and worship him in spirit and truth, he then will seek us, and delight in us." This is reading the Scriptures backward—putting the cart to draw the horse, and supposing the effect to be productive of its cause. But in opposition to this, consider, seeking implies, (1st.) That we are lost. So "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost," (Matt. 18:11.) "He was sent to the *lost sheep* of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15:21.) Who ever heard of a lost sheep seeking after its shepherd? The Father seeks us, before we seek him. Our seeking him, is the effect of his finding us. Hence, every member of Christ's church, "shall be called, *sought out.*" (Isa. 62:12.) O, this endears the love of our Father to our souls! (2d.) It implies his knowledge of us. What he says of

Jeremiah is true of all his people: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." (Jer. 1:5.) He knew us from eternity, in the covenant; chose us in Christ; and sanctified or separated us for himself, in time, to worship him in spirit and in truth. O! may this lay us under everlasting obligations to love, adore, and praise our heavenly Father! (3d.) Seeking us, implies love to us, and property in us. Who seeks for that which they set no value upon? who searches after a person they do not love? who will take pains to look for that which is not their own property? The woman who had lost the piece of money, sought it diligently, and rejoiced greatly when she had found it; for it was her own. Smile who will at the simile, it is just. There is as much disposition in a lost piece of money to seek its owner, as there is in a lost sinner to seek his God. Hast thou found God? Dost thou know him as thy Father? Dost thou worship him in spirit and in truth? O! resolve it all into his fatherly love in first seeking thee. For thus saith the Lord, "I am found of them who sought me not." (Isa. 65:1.)

MARCH 23.

Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Psalm 51:8.

Of all the sad consequences of sin, good Lord! deliver us from Antinomian licentiousness; which consists in being so hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, as to make light of it. Though David had been awfully licentious in his practice, yet we see the grace of the saint shine forth, in his brokenness of heart, sorrow of soul, and contrition of spirit for his sins. Never quote David's dreadful fall, without his deep, soul-afflicted, heart-broken, sorrow and repentance. Never think of one without the other; lest you think slightly of the most cursed evil of evils, wilful sin against a gracious God. O! who can tell the horrors of soul, and terrors of conscience, David felt, when he uttered these words? Consider them, O my soul! The Lord make sin more dreadful to thy view, and hateful in thy sight. (1st.) Spiritual joy and gladness of soul in the Lord had forsaken him. What had the gratifying his cursed lusts and vile passions brought upon him? A guilty conscience, a heavy heart, and a disconsolate soul; the Spirit of peace and joy was grieved at his conduct, and withdrawn from his soul. Satan, the tempter, was now his accuser; the ghost of *Uriah* appeared to his mind: the thought of Bathsheba brought hell into his conscience. All within was terror; all around, distress; and all above, horror. But the Lord had not given him up to a reprobate mind. He convinced him of sin; and, by grace, broke his heart for it. Hence, behold! he prayed. O! were it possible to have recalled the cursed, hellish lust and bloody deed, he would rather have parted with his crown and

kingdom, than ever have committed them. What would he now give, to hear the joy of pardon from God, to make glad his soul? For, (2d.) He complains of broken bones. Who can describe the agony of mind he now felt? A broken bone must be extremely painful: but he seems to feel, as though all the bones in his body were broken. Lord, deliver us from sin, which caused it! But why does he ascribe their being broken to God? Did not his fall cause it? Yes: but he lay many months (as it were) stupified by his fall, and insensible of his hurt. But God convinced him of his sins, and quickened him to feel pain. O, ye fools! who make a mock of sin, see! God breaks the bones even of his beloved saints for it. Better to groan with broken bones on earth, than under damnation in hell. O! think of David's pains and groans, under a sense of sin. Remember Peter went out and wept bitterly for sin. See, hence, the exceeding sinfulness of sin: but forget not the Saviour, "whose precious blood cleanseth from *all* sin." (1 John 1:7.)

Against thee, Lord, I sinned have,
And brought distress upon my soul:
O! let me for thy mercy crave,
To heal my soul, and make me whole.

MARCH 24.

Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes. Ps. 26:3.

This causes a peaceful conscience, a happy heart, and a holy life. What is meant by loving kindness? it is love expressed by action: the affection of the heart, manifested by acts of kindness. Thus the Lord speaks of his church in general, and of every individual member of it in particular, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." What then? This love manifests itself in time thus, "Therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31:3.) "I will betroth thee unto me for ever in loving kindness." (Hos. 2:19.) Being thus betrothed and drawn to the Lord, our souls have a sight and sense of his loving kindness. What is meant by its being "before our eyes?" Its engaging the attention of our mind, captivating the affection of our heart, seeing our interest in it, feeling the refreshments of it, and rejoicing on account of it; knowing there is no separation from it. Thus, everlasting love provides a Saviour; almighty grace draws poor sinners to him; and then, loving kindness becomes the glory of their hearts and the joy of their souls. We love it and meditate upon it: we not only see it, but feast upon it, and are astonished at it: we cry out with David, "Thy loving kindness is better than life itself." (Psa. 63:3.) For all our comforts in him flow from it: it is marvellous in our eyes: it exceeds expression—is beyond conception. Besides these internal effects upon the mind, the loving kindness of the Lord hath external influence upon the life. David adds, "And I have walked in thy truth." Without this, all might be the flights of fancy, and the sallies of a heated imagination. But now all is well with the poor sinner:

his heart is not only happy, but his life is holy. To walk in the truth, is to walk contrary to the deceitful hopes, lying vanities, and carnal delights of the men of this world: it is to walk, not in self righteous confidence, no more than in lawless licentiousness; but in Christ, who is the *Truth*: in holy fellowship with him, humble dependence on him, growing love to him, and longing expectation of eternally enjoying them. O, Christians! are your sins ever before you? Let the loving kindness of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, ever be before your eyes. This is the glory of saints above: let this be your glory below. For, "Thus saith the Lord, let him who glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9:24.

My God! how matchless is thy love;
Its kindness is before mine eyes;
It draws my heart to joys above,
And all thy holy ways to prize.

MARCH 25.

Behold, the skin of the face of Moses shone, and they were afraid to come nigh unto him. Exod. 34:30.

Here see the glorious effects of being on the mount with God; of having free access to and holy converse with him. When we draw nigh to God, and he draws nigh to us, our souls catch the splendour and glory of his grace. This revives our countenance, and makes our face to shine. Here is somewhat worthy our attention; for the holy inspirer calls upon us, *behold*. Lord! give us to behold this to our edification and comfort. (1st.) "When Moses came down from the mount his face shone, but he knew it not." O! it, is well for us, when we are so wholly taken up with the majesty and glory of our Lord, and see such splendour of grace and love shine on his countenance, as not to be looking at ourselves, and admiring our own gifts and graces. It is to imitate fops and fribbles in nature, to look in a glass to admire ourselves. "To fall in love with our own beauty, is to play the harlot." (Exod. 16:15.) (2d.) Though Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone, yet others saw it, and were afraid to come near him. Here behold the glory and majesty of the holy law of God: like the face of Moses, it darts its piercing rays of light and terror into the consciences of poor sinners: it works wrath; it fills the soul with the knowledge of sin, the fear of hell, and the dread of damnation. There is a glory in the law, though it ministers nothing but condemnation. (3d.) The face of Moses shone so, that he was forced to put a vail on it, while he was talking to the people. Did such a little of the glory of the law so shine in the face of Moses, and that, but with borrowed splendour,

that they could not behold his face? then, how terrifying, how dreadful to sinners, to stand before the majesty of divine justice, and to be arraigned by divine truth, as transgressors of this holy law! Who can bear the thought without terror? who can bear the sight, without death and destruction from the presence of the Lord? O! think of the law, in all its dread and terror; see sin, in all its exceeding sinfulness; and consider, (4th.) The ministration of righteousness which exceeds in glory, through the love and grace of our dear Mediator. We are called to behold him, but not with a vail upon his face. "For we all with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.) (5th.) Did the Lord cause the face of Moses thus to shine? eternal praises to him: "He hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) In him we see the law fulfilled, its curse sustained, our souls redeemed from all its terror and bondage, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.)

MARCH 26.

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Luke 17:10.

This is a fatal stab to human merit: this is a deadly blow to sinless perfection. O! flee from the idea of any merit in thee or thy works, as from the face of the devil: it is of the pride of Satan. Avoid the thought of being perfect in thyself, as thou wouldest the most damnable lie: it ariseth from self-deceit, and is established through ignorance of God's holy law. Our dear Lord here instructs us to be active, yet humble, to be obedient, yet self-abased; to do all things, yet own our unprofitableness after all. Beware you do not learn to decry that word, *duty*. It is very common for many so to do, as implying nothing but what is legal. Thy Lord here uses it. Be not wiser than thy Master. True, thou art freed from all slavish duty and legal bondage, in order to be justified and saved thereby. But run not hence into lawless liberty. Thou art bound to obey, by the love of God thy Father; commanded to serve thy Saviour Jesus—and this, with the affections of a dutiful son, and with the love of a sincere friend. "We serve the Lord Christ, knowing that in the Lord we shall receive (as a free gift of grace, not earned by duty and works) the reward of the inheritance." (Col. 3:24.) The rule of the duty of love are the commands of the law of love: the end of obeying them, is, not to make us righteous; not to exalt us in our own eyes; not to lay a foundation, to build ourselves up in self-righteous confidence. No: says our Lord, After you have done all, renounce all; humble yourselves under all: say, we are

unprofitable servants in all. Well, but is not this very discouraging, both to doing and hoping?—Not *doing*. The end of all this is to adorn the gospel of grace, to glorify the God of grace, to shew a good example to the world, and to evidence the faith, love, and hope of your soul; that you are alive to God, and that these graces are alive in you. Not to *hoping*. Do you dread that sentence, “Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness?” (Matt. 25:30.) That is, one who is disobedient, and, to every good work, reprobate; who is a stranger to pure faith, holy love, and sincere obedience. All such are without hope in Jesus. But, unprofitable as ye are, see, and confess yourselves to be; and, though you have no confidence in yourselves, or your own doing, yet you are commanded to rejoice in Christ Jesus. “And again rejoice.” (Phil. 4:4.) “For he of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (1 Cor. 1:30.) “And we are made perfectly accepted in him.” (Eph. 1:6.)

MARCH 27.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Gal. 5:25.

These two things the enemy of souls works powerfully against. (1st.) To keep sinners from coming to Christ for salvation. (2d.) When they are come, to prevent their enjoying the comfortable knowledge that Christ is their Saviour. And our own legal hearts, and wicked natures, join the enemy of our peace and salvation in both. But love lives and reigns above. Our Saviour sees how it is with us, and sends the power of his Spirit to help, relieve, and comfort us. The dear Spirit, when dead in sin, quickens us: then he guides us in our walk. What need we then of exhortations? Much, very much; for, consider, The walk is ours: to order our steps aright, is the work of the Holy Spirit. (3d.) Our comfortable enjoyment of our interest in Christ, is experienced in a holy walk, or walking in the Spirit. The battle is the Lord's. Yet David was to engage and conquer Goliath. "The Lord gave him the victory." (1 Sam. 17:47.) Therefore, (4th.) Exhortations point out our weakness, our need of the Spirit's help; and they excite us to pray for it. What is it to walk in the Spirit? (1st.) It is to mind the things of the Spirit. Those spiritual truths revealed in the gospel, concerning our hope of eternal life by the sin-atoning death, law-fulfilling life of the Son of God. It is to set our affections upon Christ, seek all our happiness in him, to expect daily comfort from him; to make his precious blood and everlasting righteousness our constant plea, expecting the reviving sense of God the Father's favour and love to us, only in him. (2d.) It is to go forward, step by step, day by day, looking for and depending

on the Spirit's assistance, to keep our souls close to Jesus, and to maintain fellowship with him. And to shew that our hearts are simple and sincere, we shall be diligent in the means of grace, studious to exercise our graces on Christ, and be uniform in the discharge of every duty. What a blessed walk is this! This is the walk of comfort, peace, and holiness. Do you not find it so? Persevere in it. So will you walk above the accusing terrors of the law, the grovelling life of sense, the defiling life of lusts, the vain life of worldly pleasures, and the distressing life of Satan's power. Wouldest thou enjoy spiritual comforts? These can only be found in a spiritual walk. Dost thou complain for want of them? Examine thy walk: say not, this is legal. What! is it legal to follow the Lord wheresoever he goeth? Beware, lest carnal notions prevail; and by living after the flesh, you condemn what is truly evangelical and spiritual. "They who are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit." (Rom. 8:5.)

MARCH 28.

I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy: and I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people; and they shall say, thou art our God. Hos. 2:23.

Declarations of grace depend not on the will of the flesh for their accomplishment. Sovereign power brings sovereign purposes to effect. Human will can neither forward nor frustrate them. So the Lord raises up and forms a people, for his glory on earth, and the Redeemer's crown in heaven. See the process of it. (1st.) "*I will sow her.*" This alludes to the word *Jezrael* in the last verse, which signifies the seed of God. God's people are his own precious seed: he sows them in the earth. (2d.) "*Unto me.*" As they are sown by him, they spring up unto him. Though they lie long under the clods of nature's darkness and corruption, and for a while spring up only to the world, the flesh, and the devil, yet there is a set time to favour them; a fixed day of power, to come upon them. Men do not sow their precious seed, and care no more about it: neither doth the Lord. For, (3d.) "*I will have mercy upon her who had not obtained mercy.*" His eye of care preserves, till his day of mercy comes. It is as impossible for an elect, redeemed soul to perish without mercy, as for the truth of God to fail. "It is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6:18.) The truth of God is the joy of faith. St. Paul, though exceeding mad against Christ, obtained mercy from him: the thief on the cross obtained mercy at the last hour: your soul, mine, and every soul that is called, converted, and justified by the faith of Christ, obtains this from mere mercy, just in the same way.

Because justice is satisfied with Christ, mercy flows from God through him to us. (4th.) *"I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people."* God's voice of love comes to us, his grace challenges us, his power apprehends us, before we apprehend him. We are children of wrath, by nature: we are at enmity against God, and fly from God. But the good Shepherd seeks us: he claims us as his own sheep—as the gift of his Father—as the purchase of his blood: he manifests himself to us, and gives us faith in his name. Then, (5th.) *"They shall say, thou art my God."* My God—O, how much is contained in this! Now, there is peace in the conscience, love in the heart, and joy in the soul. The sinner can never be happy, till he thus appropriates the Lord to himself. Then, the soul is inspired with a holy, loving fear, and excited to a cheerful walk: a hope, full of immortality, is in the heart: this is ever in the eye, "All is of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 5:18.

MARCH 29.

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted? Isa. 2:22.

This precious text my dear Lord preached to my heart, day after day, upwards of twenty years ago; when it first pleased him to make me happy in his love: though not then, yet I have seen abundant cause for it. That soul is in good health, that can say, I am sick of sin, sick of men, and sick of myself. The Lord is teaching us this lesson day after day: it is a hard one to flesh and blood. For we are naturally prone to look to, trust in, and depend upon an arm of flesh. But this is to depart, in heart, from the Lord: a curse is denounced upon this, (Jer. 17:5.) Consider, man's breath is in his nostrils. The best of men are subjects of sin, and liable to the stroke of death: the breath that promises you to-day, ere to-morrow's drawn, may be vanished into air, and all your hopes blasted: the arm of flesh, which to-day is strong and stretched forth in your service, tomorrow may be stiff in death, all your expectations buried in the grave of despair, and you left in disappointment and vexation. Whereof is man to be accounted? in his best estate he is altogether vanity. "Cease ye from man."—Yea, from professors too. You are in danger of being hurt by them also: I have, and therefore speak from experience. Here is our danger; we are apt to think too high of ministers and professors. Even St. Paul cautions against this: "Lest any man think of *me* above that which he seeth *me* to be." (2 Cor. 12:6.) You entertain a very high opinion of such an one: perhaps you may soon see something in him you little expected. You are stumbled: you get into reasoning;

he falls away from the hope of the gospel, (how many awful instances have I known, both of eminent ministers and great professors!) You are staggered: you know not what to think. Up comes Mr. Devil, with 'Ah! you see it is all a delusion: give all up: follow the gospel no longer.' But our Lord would have our hearts simply looking to him; therefore, he bids us "cease from man." He, he alone is the only precious *Man* we are never to cease from. In him there is none occasion of stumbling: he is a *perfect* man. Fix your eye steadily upon him: seek all your perfection in him: look for all your comforts from him. Cease from yourself: avoid all self-confidence: flee all self-complacency. Cease from self-righteous, vain-glorying, self-deceived liars, who say they are perfect, and have no sin in them. Ever look at, ever glory in that dear MAN, in whom we are *perfect*: "presented to the Father, holy, unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight." Col. 1:22.

We're prone, alas! to trust in man,
And from our God depart:
Convince us of this foolish plan;
Lord, take and keep our heart.

MARCH 30.

If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

The walk of many professors seems to speak this language: Why cannot we love the world, indulge ourselves in the ways of it, and yet enjoy fellowship with God? Now we have clear notions of the doctrines of grace—of acceptance with God, and justification before him, why need we be so very precise in our conduct? This seems as though they were desirous to walk as near as possible to the very borders of hell, and yet hope to get safe to heaven at last. Such walk not in the light of truth—in the comfort of love—in fellowship with God. (1st.) What is fellowship with God? It is a sweet, heart-felt concord, harmony, and agreement between God and our souls; a mutual communion of spirits; a free communication from the Lord to us, and from us to the Lord:—just as two loving friends have between each other, who act as though but one soul influenced them both. Lord! to what a high, holy, and honourable state are we miserable sinners admitted! Eternal thanks to thee, O Jesus! through whom we are admitted; and to thee, O Holy Spirit! who hast formed us for the enjoyment of this inestimable blessing. Lord, grant we may prize this sweet fellowship above all things; yea, above life itself: for what is life without it? (2d.) How is it enjoyed? by walking in the light. God dwelleth in the light. We must walk where God is, to have fellowship with him. Christ is *the light*: God is in Christ. By faith in Christ we walk with God, and have fellowship with him. Here, the Father is well pleased with us,

and we with him. We communicate to him our wants; he communicates to us every rich supply out of the fulness of Christ. Christ shines in the light of truth—in every doctrine which flows from him and centres in him. Are we loved, elected, called, justified, sanctified, and preserved unto salvation? It is IN HIM. We are to walk in that faith, which worketh by the love of these truths, worketh love to them, and to God for them; and this faith and love are contrary to all the darkness of sin and error. Christ, the light, shines in every command of his. Faith receives them. In love we obey and walk in them. But though we walk in the light, yet sin dwelleth in us. What then? This need not distress us. For, (3d.) As sure as we have fellowship with God, “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin.” Did it cleanse us yesterday? so it will to-day, to-morrow, and to the end of life. Who shall dare to set bounds to the cleansing virtue of the blood of the Son of God? No sin too great, no sinner too vile, for this precious blood to cleanse. The chief of all sinners speaks from experience. Let no one despair. For we *sinner*s “have boldness to enter into God’s presence, by the blood of Jesus.” Heb. 10:19.

MARCH 31.

Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Jer. 3:22.

Backsliding is a species of apostacy from the faith. Apostacy is the high road to destruction. Total apostacy will certainly end in eternal damnation: for there can neither be repentance, or hope, for such a soul. The Son of God is the only sacrifice for sin: this, the backslider once professed to believe. But now he tramples on his precious blood, wilfully despises and rejects the Saviour; so that now, he has only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour every adversary of Christ." (Heb. 10:26, 27.) Most striking is the picture of such, drawn by Mr. Bunyan, in his Pilgrim's Progress, as a man in an iron cage, who thus confesses: "I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes, and the eyes of others; I was, as I thought, fair for the celestial city, and had even joy at the thoughts that I should get thither: but I left off to watch and be sober—laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the word, and the goodness of my God; I grieved the Spirit, and he is gone; I tempted the devil, and he is come to me; I provoked God to anger, and he has left me; I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent. O, eternity! eternity! How shall I grapple with the misery I must meet with in eternity?" Lord, enable me to take warning by others and obey thy gracious words, which prevent thy children's total apostacy from thee. Observe, (1st.) the conduct of the Lord to such. He arraigns them in the former verses, (1st.) Of treacherously departing from him, like a wife

from her husband. O, what perfidious, faithless conduct! For, (2d.) it brings on perverting our way before God. And, (3d.) this ends in forgetting the Lord our God. This is the cause of every evil. If the objects of time and sense drive the memory of the Lord from our minds, though but an hour, how foolish do we act! Our hearts imperceptibly backslide from the sense of his presence. But O! the love of our Lord! He reminds us, (1st.) though backslidden, yet he owns us *as children*. O, father! thy love ever lives, though folly is in our ways. (2d.) He calls in love, *return*. May love cause us to take shame, fall down in sorrow, and cry for mercy. For, (3.) he promises, "I will heal your backslidings." I will freely and fully pardon them ALL, though ever so numerous, heinous, or aggravating, as though they had never been committed. Backsliding sinner! believe and rejoice. See the effects of this love in the next meditation. "O Lord my God, lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death!" Psa. 13:3.

I've nought to plead by thy free grace,
Which does in Christ abound:
Grant me to see thy smiling face,
With mercy circled round.

APRIL 1.

Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.
Jer. 3:22.

Peter was an awful backslider: his crimes deserved hell: so do yours and mine. Both he and we should be sent there, if love did not reign in heaven, and grace abound to sinners on earth. One look of love from Christ broke Peter's heart, made him weep bitterly, and return to a crucified Saviour earnestly. A bone broken and set, is stronger than it was before. This I am sure of, a heart broken by forgiving love, grows stronger in love: having much forgiven, we love much. I have often thought, fresh love added speed to Peter's feet, when he ran to the sepulchre, to see his dear, his crucified Lord. (John 20:4.) See the happy effects of loving speeches and gracious words from a loving Lord. We saw the backsliding children arraigned, and their conduct condemned, in our last meditation. What was the sentence passed on them? Was it "Go ye cursed, vile wretches! ye have gone from me in your ways: now I will be glorified in your damnation?" No! Break, hard heart; melt, O frozen soul; bow, stubborn knee, and be as sinews of a new-born babe: for love, everlasting—immutable love lives; sovereign, unmerited grace proclaims, *Return, ye backsliding children,* (children still! O matchless grace!) *and I will heal your backslidings.* What say gracious hearts to this? Do they reply, "O! this is fine doctrine. Come, let us continue to go on, to enjoy the world and sin, and delight ourselves in our happy distance from God?" O, no: this

is the language of hell-born, free-will pride. If left to that, so they would act: but a spark of free grace within us, catches fire from gracious words without; and therefore it is, *Behold!* see the effects of the Lord's rich grace and precious love. Like fire, it melts down our hard hearts; makes us lament our base conduct; affects us with the deepest sense of sin; inspires our souls with a hope of mercy and assurance of pardon: and, therefore, "we come unto thee." Here we see the actings of a holy faith in the heart. It works by love; by the loving declarations of a gracious Father and dear Redeemer. It works love in the heart; and it works by love in returning to God: here is the joyful claim of faith. "For (O precious cause!) thou art the Lord our God." Were it not so, thou couldst never have borne with our vile conduct; never have had a thought of mercy nor a look of love towards us. O! let covenant love and faithfulness ever bind our hearts to thee; that we may never more depart from thee; pervert our way before thee; or ever forget thee, O Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit! our one God in Trinity.

When we the sacred truth believe,
Of God's great love in Christ,
Our souls to him return and live;
And thus, by grace, we're blest.

APRIL 2.

—Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Jude 4.

From what the bee extracts honey, venomous insects will draw poison. The word of God, which is food to gracious hearts, is the sport and contempt of profane wits. An ungodly heart will convert the most wholesome truths of God's grace into the most poisonous effects. There ever were such men: there are such at this day, who hold forth some of the most precious truths concerning the Lord Jesus, and the grace of God abounding to sinners in him, and yet with these maintain the most damnable heresies: they are "the fools who make a mock at sin." (Prov. 14:9.) Personal holiness they hold in the greatest derision: they declare their sin as Sodom—"Say unto the wicked, it shall be well with them. Tush! the Lord careth not about our walk and life: if we have lusts, better gratify them than burn with them." And they swallow up every unscriptural error in that damnable heresy, All men shall be saved at the last. One scarcely knows which to wonder at most, why such persons should preach at all, or why any who name the name of Christ can hear them. But Scripture must be fulfilled: "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (2 Peter 3:3.) I never knew but one instance of a person, who had joined himself to these vile Antinomians, that escaped from their soul-destroying doctrines. My soul rejoiced exceedingly, at receiving a visit from this aged disciple of Jesus, who, through precious grace,

is brought back into the ways of truth and holiness. When the preacher asked him, why he had left him? he honestly answered, "Were I to hear you now, I should be almost ready to fill my pockets with stones, and stone you; for you had well nigh sent me to hell, with a lie in my right hand." O, brethren! as you love the holy Jesus; as you value your precious souls; as you prize communion with God, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, beware of such ungodly men; keep at the greatest distance from them; maintain the utmost abhorrence of their hellish notions. Why, O why did the blessed Spirit convince us of sin, and lead us to Christ for salvation; but that we should love God, delight in God, enjoy fellowship with God, have no more to do with the unfruitful works of darkness; but walk before him in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life? Be assured, if your faith does not influence you to this, it is not the faith of the holy gospel; not a faith in a holy Jesus: it does not work by the love of him; but is the faith of the ungodly, whose end is destruction. Phil. 3:19.

Faith without love's an empty dream,
It conquers not the pow'r of sin:
To live, the soul has but a name,
If Jesus reigneth not within.

Grant me, O Lord! renewing grace;
Quicken my soul from day to day,
To walk in love before thy face,
And mind not what th' ungodly say.

APRIL 3.

Let God be true, but every man a liar. Rom. 3:4.

I have read of one who was dumb; but, on seeing a violent attempt to murder his father, cried out with great vehemence, "My father!" When his heavenly Father's truth and faithfulness are attacked, St. Paul could not be mute. Fired with a holy emotion of spirit, he cries out, "Let God be true." Vain, arrogant man! Will you dare oppose your carnal reasonings, and fallacious arguments, against the covenant purposes, faithful word, and precious promises of the Lord? Every such man, be he ever so noble, mighty, wise, and learned, is a liar. St. Paul's heart was too warm for the glory of his God, to pay any soft compliment to those who act under the influence of the father of lies. The keen satire of Mr. Pope is admirably adapted to such:

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God!
In reas'ning pride (my friend) our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.

Christian, lay aside thy carnal reason. Take up the Lord's word: exercise thy faith upon it. Thou art called to be valiant for the truths of a faithful, covenant-making, and covenant-keeping God. Timid silence is criminal, when your Father's truth is arraigned, and his glory at stake. Know, thou hast much within thee, and many around thee, in combination to

oppose the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh, to bring salvation to miserable sinners; and God's faithfulness to make this effectual, by his sovereign grace, in spite of all the unfaithfulness of man. Mr. Carnal-reason says, 'How can these things be?' Mr. High-thoughts exalts himself against them; Mr. Free-will refuses to submit to them; Mr. Unbelief pronounces them impossible to be true; Mr. Self-love declares against subjection to them; Mr. Human-pride cries, 'Away with them—totally reject them!' and Mr. Self-righteousness cries them down, as leading to licentiousness. These are all professed judges of divinity; but, in reality, are lying adversaries against your Lord's truth and faithfulness, and your peace, comfort, and holiness. Abide by what is written. Oppose God's truth to all their lying suggestions. Be simple of heart. Let simple faith prevail. Feed by faith upon God's truth, and you shall prosper; whilst others cavil against it, and grow lean. Hold fast "the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised (to Christ Jesus, as our covenant head, and that we should enjoy it in him) before the world began."

APRIL 4.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.
Heb. 11:27.

Here we see faith opposed by fear, and the victory of faith over the dread of wrath. Consider his work and his danger; his faith and his safety. (1st.) Moses was engaged in a great work. He was to go to Pharaoh, and say from the Lord, "Israel is my son, even my first-born son: let him go, that he may serve me." (Exod. 4:23.) Now, might not the king very naturally look upon Moses as a very dangerous, pestilent, hot-headed enthusiast, who, under a pretence of religion, wanted to raise a rebellion in his kingdom? He had to fear, that the king might put him to death in his wrath. "For the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion." (Prov. 19:12.) Most terribly fierce! But, (2d.) consider his *faith*. This set him above fear: he bids defiance to wrath. Forsake Egypt, he must; flee from the king, he was determined: for he had the command of his God for it. Faith is the parent of all holy obedience. But was his faith nothing more than a strong impulse of his mind—something within him, which suggested to him that he must forsake Egypt? No: this he might have had, and obeyed it too, to his own destruction; but he had the Lord's word for the ground of his faith. Mind this: "Thus saith the Lord, I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring my people out of Egypt." There is the warrant for his faith. (3d.) Consider his safety. Pharaoh could not hurt the hair of his head. Why not? because the Lord added, "Certainly I will be with thee." (Exod. 3:12.) There is the certainty of his safety. Thus, he believed God, and feared not the wrath of the king.

Here see the nature and actings of true and lively faith. (1st.) It hath the word of the Lord for its object. There may be strong impressions of mind, warm suggestions of fancy, where there is not "Thus saith the Lord." Soul! these will not carry thee out of the Egypt of nature to the promised land: they will soon forsake thee. Then, thou wilt not only feel the wrath of a king, but the shaking of a leaf. (2d.) Faith in the Lord's word, delivers the soul from the fear of the Lord's enemies. According to the strength of our faith, we are set above fears of wrath. We cannot have stronger cause for faith, than the Lord's word; nor a better object for our faith, than the Son of God. O! then, when fear of wrath prevails, look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, with "Lord, increase my faith!" Luke 17:5.

'Where is your faith?' our Saviour cries;
'Believe and honour me:'
Our foolish, reas'ning heart replies,
'Christ's joys are not for me.'

Thou Author of our faith, increase
The gift which thou hast giv'n:
So shall we find thy precious peace
The antepast of heaven.

APRIL 5.

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your souls shall live. Isa. 55:3.

Some cannot bear exhortations to be used, either to saints or sinners. O, dear! they sound so legal in their ears, they are quite disgusted with them. But why? Truly, such are wise above what is written; and they proclaim their folly in condemning the conduct of Christ, and his Spirit in the prophets and apostles. They have most need of exhortations, who see least cause for them: be not high-minded, but fear. A Chinese philosopher asserted, that a man had three ears: one differed from those two which are seen. This was counted a great absurdity. But it holds true in a spiritual sense; for naturally we have ears, but hear not. "The hearing ear, the Lord hath made." (Prov. 20:12.) This Christ calls for: "Incline your ear." Act as sentenced rebels and condemned malefactors; be all ear to a sound of mercy, and a proclamation of a reprieve, from me. Though your hearts are bowed down under a sense of your lusts and corruptions—your consciences burdened with guilt—your minds pained with fears, and your spirits dejected with sorrows; yet listen not to the suggestions of Satan, the intimations of carnal reason, or the surmises of your legal spirits: but turn away your ear from all to me. O, it is precious living, thus to hear the voice of Christ! But this call from the Saviour carries conviction with it, that we do not enough incline our ear to him: therefore, we are not always happy in him. Sweet invitation! "Come unto me." His love is the same: his words are the very same to poor sinners, whether he speaks by his

prophets, or by himself in the flesh: his loving heart proclaims, "*Come unto me* all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) Come, under all your load of guilt, weight of dejection, and burden of sorrow. Christ gives us to feel all this, that we may see our want of him, come to him, and enjoy fellowship with him. Never misconstrue your soul's burdens and spiritual distress, as black marks upon you: they are love-tokens from him who says, "Hear, and your souls shall live." Not only live, but be lively; not barely live, but enjoy the vigour of life, the comforts of life, and bring forth abundantly the fruits of spiritual life. All this is by hearing the voice of Christ, believing the love of Christ, and living upon the fulness of Christ. "See then ye refuse not him who speaketh from heaven." Heb. 12:25.

Holy Prince of peace and love,
Thou who callest from above
Give the power to obey:
Keep us in the narrow way.

Thou would'st have us happy here,
In the faith and love of thee:
Fill our souls with godly fear;
Keep us to eternity.

APRIL 6.

Thy God reigneth. Isa. 52:7.

Christ commissions his ministers, to proclaim this joyful true to Zion, his church, that every member of his might receive it in faith, change the pronoun and say, *my* God reigneth. Christ's reign is his people's glory, their triumph on earth; and the shouts of disembodied saints in glory. Listen to their acclamations of joy. "Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the *Lamb* is come." Rev. 19:6, 7. Are we married to the *Lamb*? Has he our hearts and affections? Then we shall constantly rejoice, and give honor to him, that he, who is our God, reigneth. Where? Where he dwells. In heaven for us: and in our hearts over us. For, as he dwells in our hearts by faith, he spiritually reigns over all within us. O what matter of joy and consolation is this! For (1st.) If our King has set up his throne in our hearts, what enemy can hurt us? They must conquer the Lord God omnipotent, before they can subdue us. If Christ reign for us, and in us, we are sure of reigning eternally, in glory, with him. (2d.) Consider his rich grace in thus reigning. We were once under the reign of a dreadful tyrant. "Sin reigned in and over us unto death." (Rom. 5:21.) Though we have sin in our nature, though it war in our members, yet it cannot reign, and get the victory over us. It is under the feet of Christ. It is his vanquished enemy. He reigns over it. We are under the reign of his grace. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto"—what? Present peace, comfort and joy? Yes, and infinitely more, even unto "eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Is sin our grief and burden?

That is a proof that Christ reigns in our heart. Do we long for perfect freedom from all sin? That is a sign that we are partakers of his holiness. Are we afraid sin will destroy us in death? It cannot. Jesus reigns to give us victory unto eternal life. (3d.) "Behold Jesus, our king, reigns in righteousness." (Isa. 32:1.) "His people shall be all righteous." (60:21.) Christ's righteousness is upon us to justify us: his Spirit within us, to make us love righteousness and hate iniquity. If we do not, we only talk of Christ's reign, but have never felt its power. "For he must reign, till he hath put every enemy under his feet." (1 Cor. 15:25.) Therefore, (4th.) Rejoice, for all your troubles, temptations, conflicts and distresses, are under Christ's reign. No one can hurt you. And the last enemy death, shall bring you to reign with him eternally in life. Rom. 5:17.

The Lord on high doth ever reign,
For his dear people's good;
They soon shall see their foes all slain,
And shout the Lamb of God.

Then why my soul, my friends, those fears,
Which daily us annoy?
Look up to Christ, wipe dry your tears,
Rejoice with holy joy.

APRIL 7.

But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. John 8:6.

Every, the most minute transaction of the life of Christ, should be precious to the faith of our hearts. For in all that he did in life, and by all that he suffered in death, he manifested himself to be the Saviour of lost sinners. The love of his heart knows no bounds to such. He willingly came to seek, and to save them. It is his joy to find, and his glory to save the *lost*. O were it not so, the hand that writes must tremble, that holds the pen, drop it with terror, while his heart would be filled with distress, and his soul sink into black despair. But, O this faithful saying, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*," braces every nerve with joy, and fills the whole man with triumph—See a vile prostitute brought before our Lord; and her crimes charged upon her. She was taken in the act. Here are witnesses to prove it. Her sin admits not of a doubt. Yet, Christ pays no attention to them. He pours the utmost contempt upon them. From the holy Jesus, should we not expect to hear, "Take the vile abandoned woman from before me, and punish her as her abominable sin deserves"? Are not our self-righteous hearts ready to rise at his conduct? "With his finger he wrote on the ground." Fine amusement for a judge! No, that was not his office. He came not to try, judge, and condemn, but to save sinners. But does he not seem to connive at her sin? By no means. He has an utter abhorrence of all sin, at the same time that he has infinite love to sinners. His love works by conviction on the heart, and then administering comfort to the burdened conscience. He

had many self-righteous persons before him. While they accused this woman he aimed to convict them. It is said, an ancient Greek copy declares, "Christ wrote on the ground the sins of every one of them." Be that as it may, they were convicted in their own consciences. They had not a stone to cast at this poor woman. They left her alone with Christ. What says he to her? "I do not condemn thee, go and sin no more." He speaks as the sinner-justifying, sin-hating Saviour. Now imagine yourself to be that guilty sinner, such you are: Standing before Christ, that you do: Accused by the law, and condemned by your own conscience, that you must own; and yet Jesus saying, guilty, hell-deserving as you are, yet I do not condemn thee, I fully justify, and freely absolve thee from all sin. O what peace, comfort, and joy would inspire your soul! Well, this is true. Faith receives it, and takes up the triumphant challenge, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Rom. 8:33.

Tho' Jesus pleads the sinner's cause,
Yet sin he hates, detests, abhors;
Then let us sin avoid with care,
That we may in his favour share.

Because grace reigns thro' righteousness,
Shall we not strive for holiness?
The love of Christ constrains that heart,
That e'er of sin has felt the smart.

APRIL 8.

Woe unto them which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Isa. 5:23.

Persons are said in the Scripture to do a thing, when they aim to do it, and, if it were in their power, would do it: so apostates are said "to crucify the Son of God afresh." (Heb. 6:6.) But that is impossible. Yet, by denying Christ to be the Son of God, they justify the act, and, were it in their power, would do it again. So here, a woe is denounced against persons for teaching cursed, corrupt doctrine. (1st.) "They justify the wicked for a reward." This is the common and prevailing doctrine of our day. The wicked is the character of every natural man. Let the lives of such be ever so wicked, yet, instead of being told the necessity of being born again of the Spirit and justified by the Son of God, they are taught to believe they can bribe God's justice, obtain his favour, and justify their souls in his sight, by their duties and good works. If the Lord had not interposed by his special grace, such teachers would have sent my wicked soul to hell, with a lie in my right hand. Glory to thee, O Spirit! for teaching me the justification and salvation of precious Jesus. His blood is my plea for pardon; his righteousness my plea for justification unto life. Then, (2d.) we are beset, on the other side, with those who would take away our righteousness from us. What is the righteousness of the righteous? His own works and obedience? do these constitute us righteous in the sight of God? No. Why not? because they fall short of the rule of righteousness—the law of God. As they do not fulfil the

righteous law, we cannot be made righteous thereby. Were our justification put upon this, the holiest saint must be damned for want of righteousness. Hear this and tremble, ye self-righteous; hear this and be humble, ye sin-convicted souls. "Yet rejoice in Jesus; for he is *the Lord our righteousness.*" (Jer. 23:6.) "He is of God made unto us righteousness." (1 Cor. 1:30.) "We are made the righteousness of God *in him.*" (2 Cor. 5:21.) This ONE, everlasting righteousness we receive by faith, and glory in alone. But there be those who would rob us of it, and spoil our glorying in it. They tell us, this faith leads to licentiousness: we reply, there is a woe against you from the Lord: you are linked with those "who call evil good, and good evil," etc. "who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight; yea, with drunkards also." (ver. 20-22.) See what sad company you are in. Your heads are intoxicated with pride, and your hearts blinded to the truth, by your own fancied righteousness. You decry this truth, which you have not experienced, "In the Lord shall sinners be justified, and shall glory." Isa. 45:25.

APRIL 9.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment; he who feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18.

The wild fire of nature's passions are often mistaken for heavenly love. These have hurried people into dreadful delusions. Some have pretended to be so *perfect in love*, as to have nothing but pure love in them, and that the being of sin was entirely taken out of them. But they have soon given awful evidence, that they "deceived themselves, and that the truth was not in them." (1 John 1:8.) Be wise by other's harms. Study the word of God: abide by that. Live upon the *perfect love* of God: glory in that alone. For you are, and ever will be, while in the body, the subject of sin, therefore subject to that fear which hath torment: to fear God as an enemy, armed with almighty vengeance and vindictive wrath against you, a sinner. How is this tormenting fear to be cast out? By love; the *perfect love of God in Christ* to sinners. This, clearly known, cordially received and steadily believed in the heart, ejects all fear that hath torment. "There is no fear in love." When we are fully persuaded of God's love, in giving his Son to die for our sins, and to save us from wrath: this precious, everlasting, immutable, perfect love of God the Father, and God the Son, shed abroad in our hearts by God the Holy Ghost, fills our minds with peace and joy: it suffers no tormenting fears of hell and damnation to remain. Our hearts are full of heaven. The love of heaven is in our souls. For "God is love, and God dwelleth in us." Thou, poor sinner, dejected with fears, bemoaning thy sins, and mourning thy

want of love to God, dost thou confess that Jesus is the Son of God? Know then, to thy present peace and everlasting comfort, "God dwelleth in thee, and thou in him." Do you ask, but why then am I so often tormented with fear? The apostle answers, you are not made perfect in, rather *by love*. Instead of firmly believing, and steadily living upon the perfect love of God in Christ, you lose sight of it, are slow of heart to believe it, and let it slip out of your mind. Hence, fears prevail again in your conscience. Here we mistake. We look for perfect love in ourselves to God, instead of the perfect love of God to us. If we find not a constant, pure flame of love ever burning in our hearts, without any smoke of contrary affections, tormenting fears beset us. This is for want of being established in God's love to us. 'Tis by this we are made perfect in our conscience, that God is at *perfect* peace with us in Christ. Hence, we are happy: "We love God, because he first loved us." (verse 10.)

O! God of love, now shed abroad
Thy perfect love within my breast,
That I may run the heav'nly road
With joy to thy eternal rest.

APRIL 10.

At that day, saith the LORD, thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali. Hos. 2:16.

Many people say, "The Scripture is a dead letter." Who told them so? not God in his word. True, St. Paul says, "The letter killeth." (2 Cor. 3:6.) This cannot prove the Scripture to be a dead letter; but only, that the letter of the law is a ministration of death. Therefore, even the law cannot be a dead letter: for that which killeth cannot be dead itself. St. Stephen calls it, "The lively oracles." (Acts 7:38.) Our Lord says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63.) If we are dead to the law and married to Christ, here is a precious word of spirit and life from our loving bridegroom to us this night. Married by faith: this is what constitutes "that day," that gospel-day of our espousals. Whatever may be in the womb of God's purpose and decree concerning any sinner, yet he can enjoy no comfort of it, till brought into actual marriage union to Christ, by faith. "Saith the Lord." When you read this, consider yourself in your Lord's presence, and your Lord speaking freely to you. "Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali." Why not? as both names signify my husband. "Thy maker is thy Baali." (Isa. 54:5.) O! but there is much more love and sweetness in the one than in the other. Here is an overflow of the Lord's affectionate heart to us. *Ishi* is expressive of precious affection and holy familiarity; *Baali*, of the lordly power, which keeps the soul in subjection; domineering over it, so as to keep it at a distance, and making it shy of its Lord. Many women can truly call their

husbands Baali, because they lord it over them: their fear and dread of them is greater than their love and affection to them. But our dear Lord would not have it so with us; therefore, bids us, "Call me Ishi." Mr. Henry says, "Ishi is, *Vir meus*, my man: A MAN, the LORD. (Gen. 4:1.) O, the affectionate love! O, the marvellous humility of our Lord and husband! May he help us to improve these precious words. (1st.) In casting away all servile fear and slavish dread of our Lord. He has taken away the law that cursed us; put away sin which caused it; and there is nothing but love and compassion in his heart to us. O! let us, (2d.) prove this, in coming to him, with the same freedom and familiarity as a loving wife to her affectionate husband; and tell him of our sorrows and wants, that he may comfort us and supply them. (3d.) Let us imitate Christ in the purity of his love and the chastity of his affection. Turn from all other lovers. Delight more in his company, and walk closer with him in love. "For the love of Christ passeth knowledge." Eph. 3:19.

APRIL 11.

Ye are fallen from grace. Gal. 5:4.

Awful words! Enough to excite in us a holy fear, a godly jealousy, and this earnest cry, "Lord, uphold me by thy free Spirit." What is here meant by grace? the doctrine of God's free favour, to lost sinners in Christ? redeeming their souls from the curse of the law, by his blood; justifying their persons before God, by his righteousness, without any works of their own; and saving them, without any desert of theirs. O, my Lord! what rich, what matchless grace is this! My soul shall love and praise thee eternally in heaven for this! No! but, stop: thy joy is damped:—thou mayest fall from this grace; lose the favour of God; fall into hell. Who says this? Some say, St. Paul here does. No; it is as impossible for a saint in Christ Jesus thus to fall, as for a glorified saint in heaven to fall into hell. Christ is God. It is impossible for God to lie. For Christ says, "My sheep shall never perish." (John 10:28.) If they did, God the Father must change in his love; God the Son shed his blood, in the greatest agony, in vain; God the Spirit's work upon their hearts would be fruitless; and hell would triumph against the love, grace, and power of Jehovah. Bless the Lord, O my soul! for persevering, as well as converting grace. What, then does the apostle here mean? (1st. and principally,) These Galatians, professors of the great and glorious doctrines of the grace of God, had fallen into other notions of justification, than by the righteousness of Christ only: they thought their own works must, in some measure, be the procuring cause, first or last. Therefore, (2d.) they were fallen from the profession they once made, that

they were lost and perishing sinners, daily coming short of the glory of God, destitute of a righteousness to justify them in his sight, and must be eternally damned, without the righteousness of Christ. For, (3d.) they were now fallen into a high opinion of their own free will, to work out a righteousness to justify them in whole or in part; that their faithfulness to grace received, would entitle them to the divine blessing; their own sinless perfection would keep them in God's favour. If at first they were not justified by their own works, yet there was a second justification, when their works would entitle them to glory. This is the case with some in our day: at first, they thought God's free grace, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, would entirely save them; but now, grown wise in their own eyes, and mighty strong in their own power, they are fallen from the grace of the gospel into the pride of nature: they say, "We once leaned too much to Calvinism." Now, forsaking the truth, they get perfection in themselves: now, they can do without the imputed righteousness of Christ, and vehemently exclaim against the doctrines of grace. . . . From such falling, good Lord! deliver us.

APRIL 12.

By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. Rom. 5:19.

St. Paul speaks of "Another Jesus, another *Spirit*, and another gospel." (2 Cor. 11:4.) Some talk of a Jesus, who shed his blood for sinners, and yet leaves them to perish for want of righteousness: this is another Jesus than what the Scriptures reveal. They speak of a Spirit, who strives to make sinners righteous; but, meeting with so much unexpected, perverse wickedness in their nature, he gives over his attempt, and suffers them to perish in their sins: this is another Spirit, than that Spirit, whose office it is to convince us of sin, and of the righteousness of Christ, to sanctify us in him, and to glorify Jesus. Again; they preach what they call gospel, which consists of certain terms to be fulfilled, and conditions performed by us, in order to obtain righteousness and eternal life: this is another gospel, than that good news of everlasting righteousness, life, and salvation, being the free gift of God through Christ, to hopeless, helpless, desperate sinners. The subtlety of the serpent is in all this. Our minds, though espoused to Jesus, are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. St. Paul was jealous over souls with a godly jealousy, on account of this: we ought so to be over our own souls. Here is a plain, simple truth: "By the ONE obedience of Jesus shall many be made righteous." That heart is not simple, which raises the least cavil, or objection, to the obedience of Christ imputed to believing sinners; or says, they are or may be made righteous in any other way. Such reject the truth, deny the faith, corrupt the mind, dishonour

our Lord, and deprive souls of the comfort and joy which spring from believing in Jesus to be "*the Lord our righteousness.*" Avoid such, as you would those who deny the divinity of our ever dear Lord. Hold fast and rejoice in this blessed truth, that though you are a miserable sinner in yourself; though your obedience, after all your sincere strivings and earnest endeavours, is maimed and imperfect; yet the perfect, spotless obedience of the Son of God is yours, imputed to your account: as much yours, as though you had, in your own person, obeyed every jot and tittle of the law of God. By this one obedience of Christ, you are perfectly righteous in God's sight. He looks on you, loves you, and treats you as such. O! then, poor sinners, be not dejected, as without hope; but rejoice and give glory to your dear Surety, who has fulfilled all righteousness for you, that you should eternally love, serve, and rejoice in him, though you have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3.)

God's truth demands obedient faith;
We're bound to hear whate'er he saith:
Then to thyself for sin take shame,
And all the glory give the Lamb.

APRIL 13.

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. Prov. 28:26.

We all do so naturally: therefore, we are all natural fools. But, through our blindness, we are ignorant of it; through pride, we will not own it. How many continue in this awful state of folly, ignorance, and pride! Among the many who are made wise unto salvation, how doth this folly of self-confidence cleave to them! Say some, "To be sure, it is the greatest folly for natural men to trust in their own hearts; for they are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: but God hath given me a new heart, a clean heart, and a good heart; and surely I may trust in it." This is the natural language of folly; not the judgment of a new creature in Christ. Hear the Lord: "I will give them an heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." (Jer. 24.) So that the new heart, the clean heart, and the good heart, which is from the Lord, knows the Lord as its only confidence, and returns to the Lord, and trusts in him wholly and solely. This is the nature of true faith, to go entirely out of ourselves, and to trust wholly in the Lord. It is the foolish, deceitful, wicked workings of the old evil heart of unbelief, that causes self-confidence. Such was Peter's vain confidence: hence, he got a dreadful fall, to teach him more humility. Hazael was very self-righteous: he started and stared, when he was told what a wicked thing he should do. All the disciples forsook Christ, notwithstanding their bold declarations to the contrary. Would not that mariner be a fool, who should trust his ship to ride out a storm, with an anchor of cork, and a cable of straw? He

exalteth such folly, who trusts in any inherent righteousness, wisdom, and power of his own: for he thereby withdraws his confidence, in our only righteous, wise, and powerful Friend and Saviour. Trust not in the fine frames and warm feelings of your heart. The graces of the Spirit are not bestowed to exalt self-confidence, but to glorify Jesus, in whom should be our whole and sole trust. For "of God he is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." To what end? a most blessed one. O! study it more and more, day by day, "That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1 Cor. 1:31.

How foolish a part,
To trust in one's heart.
And let go the LAMB, and from him depart!

Lord, beat down our pride;
O! keep near thy side,
And keep chaste to thee, as thy loving bride.

While in thee we trust,
And of thee do boast,
Let us joy in thee thro' the Holy Ghost.

APRIL 14.

For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. Psalm 25:11.

Strange plea! *Great* is mine iniquity, therefore pardon it! Such an address at a throne of grace, never arose from a self-righteous heart. No: with the Pharisee of old, such are ready to say, "Thank God I am not such a sinner as David was: I never committed the horrid crimes of murder and adultery: his iniquity was great indeed." It was so; but souls, enlightened by the word of truth, to see the spirituality of the holy law of God, will agree to our Saviour's comment upon it, that lust is adultery in the heart, and anger a species of murder in the soul. (Matt. 5:28.) "Out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries," etc. (chap. 15:19.) Sensible of the desperate wickedness of our heart, convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, who will dare plead, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is *little*? Is it against a little God, sin is committed? Is it a little wrath revealed against sin? Did a little Christ die for us? Is a little hell the punishment of sin? Lord forbid that we should think little of sin, or that iniquity should appear little in our eyes! The iniquity of each of us all is great.

O! says a poor, sin-burdened soul, mine iniquity is great, too great to be forgiven. So the father of lies might suggest to David: but he believed him not. Great as his iniquity was, he did not aggravate his crimes, by rejecting God's declaration of mercy, invitations of grace, and promises of pardon. He confesses his great iniquity: he pleads pardon for it. On what does he found his plea? "*For thy name's sake, O Lord!*" Thou

hast taken upon thee that precious name, JESUS. "Thou wilt be *salvation* to the ends of the earth." (Psalm 98:3.) Thy blood cleanseth from *all* sin: wash me in it, and I shall be whiter than snow. ALL manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. O! while these glorious truths stand upon record, I cannot doubt—I dare not despair. The belief of them causes me to pray, and plead, and hope. *Great* as mine iniquity is, *great* as my distress is; yet thou art a *great* God and Saviour, to pardon my sin and give peace to my soul. Was ever any sinner sent to hell with such a plea in his mouth? No: that is impossible. For the word of God cannot be broken, which says, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John 1:9.) Therefore, heaven resounds with acclamations of joy from such pardoned, glorified sinners. O that we may join them in giving glory unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Rev. 1:5.

No sin however great,
Shall keep me from my God:
For Christ's salvation is complete;
I'll plead his cleansing blood.

Pardon, O Lord, my soul,
Bring comfort to my mind;
O! make my wounded spirit whole,
And cause me joy to find.

APRIL 15.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. 2:10.

This text has been seized by Arminian hands, dragged to their mint; the impress of man's faithfulness struck on their minds, as his title to a crown of life; and pressed into their service, to militate against the electing love of God, and finished salvation by Christ only. O, Christian! does not your heart rise with indignation against such a self-exalting notion? It is the very dregs of unfaithfulness to Christ. Are you not ready to spurn it with a holy vehemence, saying, Get to hell, from whence you sprung? What! my faithfulness on earth the cause, the condition, the merit of my being crowned in heaven! O, my law-fulfilling, justice-satisfying, sin-atoning Jesus! can I ever think so meanly of thy agony and bloody sweat; thy cross and passion; thy precious death and burial; thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and of the coming of the Holy Ghost? as though all this obtained no more for me, than to make way for my faithfulness, to entitle me to a crown of glory! O, Christ-glorifying Spirit! never didst thou teach such a diminutive thought of Christ's finished salvation. Forbid that my soul should ever indulge such a self-exalted notion: enable me to attend to my Lord's gracious words. What means he by our being faithful? to believe on him to death, to exercise our faith constantly on him as our dear Saviour, whose blood has atoned for our sins—whose righteousness justified our persons—has perfectly reconciled us to God, and who ever lives to love, pray for, and save us to the uttermost: steadily to believe his word of truth, which

exalts his grace and love: sincerely to obey his precepts which adorn his gospel: to live upon him, as our only title to glory, as our head of influence, and to receive, out of his fulness, grace upon grace, to ripen us for glory. Thus, faithfully to confess him to be our all in all, and ourselves nothing at all, in the work of salvation: to be faithful to his advice, "After ye have done all these things, say, we are"—what? Perfect, sinless creatures, who have our own faithfulness to plead at death, for a crown of glory? O, no! this would be most arrogant unfaithfulness, to such a precious Saviour, even were we called to the stake for his truth. But even martyrs, in the midst of the flames, must say, "We are unprofitable servants." (Luke 17:10.) To be faithful unto death, is to renounce the filthy rags of our own righteousness; all our own faithfulness; cleaving unto Christ, saying, 'O that I may win Christ, and be found in him; who gave me grace to be faithful, and graciously promises a crown of life, as his free gift.' (Rom. 6:23.)

Sin shall not bow my spirit down,
Nor chase me from my Lord:

His mercy lifts my spirits up,
To hear and trust his word.

APRIL 16.

Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen: let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. Judges 10:14.

A severe sarcasm from the Lord to apostate sinners! It causes a hell upon earth to a renewed soul, to hear and feel just upbraidings from the Lord of heaven: this is one of his severest chastizings to his children. Here is an awful charge, and a severe reproof: the Lord keeps us clear of the one, that we fall not under the other. Consider, (1st.) the charge: it is idolatry. They had gods of their own choosing. For the Lord's sake, and for our soul's sake, let us not think, we are in no danger of falling into this sin! It is committed by professors every day. Aged Paul wept over such. Though they professed Christ, yet they were enemies to his cross: their belly was their god: "Their hearts were set upon earthly things." (Phil. 3:19.) Such are not content with Christ as their own; to live in fellowship with him: to walk in self-denied love and obedience before him; and to derive all their comfort and happiness from him. The lusts of the flesh they gratify. Earthly things have their hearts. Thus they give up the Lord, and give in to idolatry against him. O! what a most heinous crime is this! how much practised! how little thought of, deplored, and deprecated! Christians, where are your hearts? Who has your affections—God, the flesh, or the world? If not God, depend on it you will soon, very soon hear from him, in such a way as will be awfully distressing. Consider, (2d.) the reproof. A day of tribulation will come. When sorrow and distress seize on your minds, then God is a blessed refuge. But O! then, to think, 'Alas! I have forsaken the Lord—have preferred other

lovers to him—chosen other gods besides him: the world has had my heart and my hope: I have lived to the flesh: I have minded earthly things, and indulged covetous desires.' Well, but I read, notwithstanding all this, "The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, say[ing], We have forsaken our God, and served idols." (verse 10.) Ah! but mind the Lord's cutting answer: "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you." A more severe reproof is scarcely to be found in the Bible. O! lay it to heart. Deeply consider its import. Do not, I pray you, cast away this with contempt, as very legal. For, consider, the Lord, though he, as your Father, may everlastingly love your persons in Christ; yet he hates your conduct, and will make you smart for it in your conscience. True, it is said, "The Lord's soul was grieved for the misery of his children." (verse 16.) But, O consider, the great misery they must feel to grieve the soul of the Lord! What a compassionate Saviour is our Christ! "In all our afflictions, he is afflicted." Isa. 63:9.

APRIL 17.

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD JESUS. Col. 3:17.

I have sometimes thought, how is it possible that a believer in Christ can ever willingly and deliberately commit any one sin? It is hardly to be conceived, that such can live and walk under the power of sin. I am sure all sin is as contrary to the nature of a new-born soul, as heaven to hell: yet nothing is more plain, from the word of God, and the experience of his saints, than that sin dwells in them. But they are solemnly forbidden to "let sin reign in them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof." (Rom. 6:12.) And if our souls are not striving against sin, and pressing after holiness, I know not where to find one text, in the word of God, to encourage us to believe and hope, that we are the children of God. I dread not the Satanic grin of licentious Antinomians. Does their infectious breath pronounce this *legal*? It only proclaims their unregenerate enmity against God's truth, his grace, and his glory.

Ye believers in, and lovers of the Lord Jesus! here is a short, but most blessed and comprehensive rule, for your walk and conduct. Does Satan tempt, the world allure, and the flesh lust? Gratify them, if ye can; only see that you do it according to this apostolic rule: yea, get drunk, game, go to plays, routs, take your full swing in carnal pleasures and sensual delights, and mix with the wicked and profane—only see that you do all this as here commanded, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Does your heart recoil? It must, if the name of the Lord Jesus is music to your ears, and the joy of your soul: you

can no more take delight in these things, than in the music of hell. O the matchless charms of that precious name! Lord, never, never suffer them to wear off our hearts. Thy name charms away the power of sin, the love of the world, and the pleasures of sense: it charms our souls into the presence of God, fellowship with God, and into the joys of heaven. Right welcome are we to God, fully reconciled to him, and perfectly accepted with him, in the name of the Lord Jesus. O, my dear, dear Saviour! it is in thy precious name my heart would now indite. O for the pen of a ready writer, to display the glories of thy precious name, my King and my Lord! May the readers of these meditations, find the odour of thy name in them, "As ointment poured forth, that they may love thee." (Song 1:3.) To us, sinners, "the name of Jesus is above every name." Phil. 2:9.

Thy words & deeds, thou matchless Lamb,
Proclaim thy love to me:
O! may I live and love thy name,
And ever honour thee.

This wicked world, with all its charms,
Put underneath my feet:
Keep me encircled in thine arms,
Where all my comforts meet.

APRIL 18.

My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord. Psa. 104:34.

Sweet meditation of the Lord causes gladness in the Lord, inspires us with the love of the Lord, and inclines us to ascribe the glory of all we enjoy to the Lord. It is said of Constantine the Great, that, after God had honoured him with many victories, as the effigies of other emperors were set up in a triumphant manner, with their victories engraven upon their loins, he desired that his might be set in a posture of prayer, kneeling, that he might manifest to the world, that he attributed all his victories more to his prayers than his sword. This was the result of sweet meditation. What great gain do souls reap by spiritual meditation! Strangers to this delightful exercise, know not what others gain, nor their own loss. A day spent without some meditation of the sinner's Redeemer and Saviour, is a day lost. For Jesus gets no glory from our hearts. We get no comfort from his love. Paul the aged exhorts his son Timothy, "*Meditate on these things.*" (1 Tim. 4:15.) What things? the Scriptures, which testify of Christ, and the peace and salvation which are brought unto poor sinners by him. O, how sweet is this! Saints, in all ages, have one and the same delightful object to meditate upon. The soul, under the sweet exercise of grace, knows no end of it; nor how to leave off meditating on HIM, who hath loved us, sinners, with an everlasting love, and saved us with an everlasting salvation. His person is *wonderful*,—God and man in one Christ. The love of Christ passeth knowledge. The offices of Christ, as King, Priest, Prophet, Mediator, Surety,

Redeemer, Saviour, how glorious in their nature! how interesting to us sinners! The blood of Christ, how precious! his righteousness, how perfect! his death, how affecting! his resurrection, how joyful! the salvation of Christ, how comforting! his intercession, how prevailing! his grace in the heart, how sin-subduing and soul-purifying! his almighty power, in keeping us through faith unto eternal salvation, how animating! and the perfect sight and full enjoyment of Jesus in glory, how transporting! Contemplations on these blessed subjects, will cause us to cry out with David, "My mediation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." Now, do you complain for want of gladness in the Lord? It is because your heart is carried away after other things. You meditate too much on them, and too little on your God, who saith, "I will not forget thee." Isa. 49:15.

My soul is never well, but when
I on my best Beloved dwell:
He's fairer than the sons of men—
His love and grace unsearchable.

Tho' in myself I'm nought but sin,
Yet in my Lord I will be glad:
His blood doth cleanse and keep me clean,
And in his righteousness I'm clad.

APRIL 19.

My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me, according unto thy word. Psa. 119:28.

While the wicked are gay, alert, and merry, many of God's beloved children go bowed down, from day to day, with heaviness of soul. When they compare themselves with the men of the world, under such seasons, they are tempted to write bitter things against themselves, and to pass a verdict in favour of others. Soul! in the heaviest season, and most dejected frame you ever experienced, say, Could you find it in your heart to wish to change lots with them? What! quit your faith in Jesus, and hope of eternal enjoyment of him—for what? the momentary gratifications and short lived pleasures of time and sense. Alas! my soul is in such heaviness, that I doubt whether I have either a spark of faith or a ray of hope in Christ. My soul melteth: it bears no image nor impression of any grace, or of the power of any truth. Faith fails: hope decays: my heart sinks. I am burdened with a sense of sin; oppressed with temptations; and, what is heaviest of all, the Lord hides his face and deserts my soul. David felt all this: Peter experienced the same. Hence he says, "For a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Pet. 1:6.)

Mind those two words; there is support and relief in them: "*For a season.*" Blessed be Jesus, heaviness lasts not always. He will deliver out of it. "*If need be.*" There is cause for it: good shall issue from it. What is the remedy when the soul is in heaviness? prayer: pleading God's word of grace, and

promises of love, for strength under burdens and deliverance from soul-heaviness. "Strengthen thou me according unto thy word." Says wisdom, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop." The poor soul sinks under its burden. "But," says he, "A good word maketh it glad." (Prov. 12:25.) Where shall ye find a good word? in the gospel of the grace of God. Here is a good word; enough to make thy heavy heart leap for joy, and thy burdened soul sing for gladness. O! meditate upon it, pray over it; and may the Lord, the Spirit give thee comfort from it. It is the work and office of thy blessed Saviour: in his own time, way, and manner, he will most surely fulfil it. "To appoint unto them who mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that the Lord may be glorified." Isa. 61:3.

In all my burden'd frames of heart,
When sin and sorrow sinks me down,
I still will cry, my God thou art,
Thy faithful promises to own.

To thee alone for strength I'll cry,
For strength can come from none but thee;
O Jesus, thou art ever nigh,
And full of sympathy.

APRIL 20.

I have all and abound: I am full. Phil. 4:18.

Happy Paul! infinitely richer than the most opulent monarch under heaven. Ye poor, wretched, covetous, worldlings! whose gold is your god, and who are labouring to add heap to heap—how long? Till ye drop into eternity, die like fools, and forever lose the idol of your hearts? Behold here a man, who has more than ever you possessed. He has ALL: you only obtain a part of what you aim at; you are still in want of more. Rich, happy Paul possesses ALL. "And," says Paul, "I abound." Not in want and wish, but in full enjoyment. "I am full." I can contain no more. He had "the unsearchable riches of Christ" for his portion. His wealth consisted in his mind being contented with that, as his greatest treasure.

O! thou poor, murmuring disciple of Christ, who art often fearing and distrusting, lest thou shouldst want the bread that perisheth for thyself and family; and thou, my soul! who hast often been exercised with this sore temptation, learn a lesson to-night about rich and happy Paul. Of all men in the world, would you expect to hear St. Paul say, "I have all things and abound: I am full"? What! he, who has been in necessities, destitute, in want, in nakedness; who, like his Master, had not where to lay his head; yet for him to say, "I have all and abound: I am full!" O, may the Lord contract our wants! they are most of them more imaginary than real. Lord, enable us to be content with such things as we have! What are they? Come, Christian, count up your riches: look over the deeds of your inheritance: see what vast possessions you are entitled

to. Verily, no less than what St. Paul once had by faith, and now enjoys in full possession; even Jesus, the God of his salvation. Christ is all in all. If he dwells in your heart by faith, he filleth all. You have all; you abound in all; you are full of all. The flesh may lust for more. The spirit must be quite satisfied with HIM. "For all things are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:23.) Learn hence, the use and blessedness of your faith: it brings the unsearchable riches of Christ into your hearts. When flesh and sense require to be gratified, here is the work of faith, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. 13:14.

Jesus, thou art all my treasure:
When fill'd with thee, I want no more:
This is still my greatest pleasure,
To glory in my heav'nly store.

Come, come, my Lord! O sweetly come,
And take possession of my heart:
Then, other lovers find no room;
Thou, only thou, my portion art.

APRIL 21.

He that is of God heareth God's words. John 8:47.

"The words from Mount Sinai gender to bondage." (Gal. 4:24.) Some of God's children are kept under bondage by them. They are taught to look on themselves only as *servants*, not *sons* of God, because they dare not say they know their sins are forgiven. This is a foolish, unscriptural distinction. St. Paul expressly declares, that every believer is a son of God: "Ye are ALL the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26.) Can a man be a servant of God without faith? No: "without faith, it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6.) Every one who hath faith in the Son of God, is a child of God: his sins are as surely forgiven, as that Christ died for sinners: he shall never come into eternal condemnation for them, no more than if he had never committed them. "This is God's word." (John 5:24.) As many as receive Christ, that is, believe on his name, have the privilege of becoming the sons of God. (John 1:12.) How came they by this faith? "By hearing the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) Without this, what is called faith in only fancy. The knowing our sins to be forgiven, which some make so great a stir about, if not attained through the faith of God's word, is only a vain confident delusion: at best, with them it affords but sorry comfort; for they say, A forgiven sinner, after all, may be damned for his sins. O! most dishonourable to the precious blood which atoned for them! Cease ye from such. Hear God's word: that speaks God's truth, and displays his glory; whilst it proclaims his love in the full, free, certain, and absolute salvation of sinners, by Jesus Christ. He who heareth this as God's word, receiveth this as

God's truth, and believeth this, in his heart, is of God; born of God; born to know, love, enjoy, and rejoice in God. Here is a plain mark, to know whether you belong to God or not: try yourself by it to-night. Do you love God's word? Is it the delight of your heart, and the glory of your soul? Do you believe its truth, and love to walk after its precepts? Then, so sure as you are a son of Adam, you are a *son of God*. You will assuredly enjoy the comfort of this, (1st.) By studying your Father's will; and, (2d.) In walking in the belief of your Father's unchangeable love; and, (3d.) In living to your Father's glory. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves, according to your former lusts in your ignorance: but as he who hath made you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." O, Father! speak this word with power to our souls, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:14, 15, 16.

The hearing ear, the knowing heart,
Come both from thee, O Lord!
O! keep us, that we ne'er depart
From hearing of thy word.

Yea, let us know and practise too,
Our Lord's most holy will;
And shew our faith, by what we do,
That love reigns in us still.

APRIL 22.

Is it true? Dan. 3:14.

A question this from a potent monarch, backed with a dreadful threatening: enough to have put Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to the stand. Their answer must provoke their God, or their king. But did they hesitate a moment? were they at all in doubtful suspense? No: they had faith in their Lord; and they boldly replied, "O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Our cause lies before our God. We are not left to ourselves. Our present life, our immortal soul, is in his hands. If you command us into the fiery furnace, our God will be with us. We shall be safe: he will deliver us. Either our bodies that we have shall not be burnt; or, if they are, the burning furnace shall be only a fiery chariot, to convey our souls to heaven and glory. See the power of faith. According as they believed, so it was. The Son of God was with them: the fire could not hurt them. Hence, consider, (1st.) that God may, and sometimes does, suffer his dearest children to be brought into great straits, and threatened with the greatest dangers, so that an answer to a single question may perplex them. It is true? Are you one who follows this new way? Do you pretend to be justified by the Son of God only; to be saved by the grace of God entirely; and to have received the Spirit of God freely? On an answer to this, perhaps, depends a parent's regard, or a friend's kindness: the one threatens to disinherit; the other, to withdraw his favours. Do worldly interest, honour, or advantage depend upon the answer of the tongue and the conduct of the life? Do poverty and want seem to threaten, if we declare ourselves for the Lord? Here

is the trial of faith. But, (2d.) remember our Lord's declaration: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father." (Mark 8:38.) Therefore, put this question to your heart.—Is it true, that God is my Father? is Christ my Saviour? Doth the Spirit bear witness to this in the word and to my heart? shall I then so fear a worm of the earth, as to decry the truth, and forsake that Lord who hath promised he will never leave nor forsake me: and that those who trust in him shall not want any good thing? (Psalm 34:10.) My soul starts, my heart recoils at the thought. Rather say, I will not fear what man can do unto me. Give up and forgo all for Christ. Soon we shall see these children: then they will tell us, they never were so happy in their lives, as in the fiery furnace. God is most with his children, when they suffer most for him.

O give me courage, dearest Lord,
Against my greatest foes,
To tell thy sacred truth abroad,
Nor fear their threat'ning woes.

APRIL 23.

God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. 2 Chron. 32:31.

Hezekiah was a great and a good man: he had rich experience in divine grace. Still he discovered, that he had a sinful nature, and a deceitful heart. Though an eminent saint of God, yet pride and vain-glory beset him. I have been led to think, there seems a little of the spirit of the pharisee, in his beseeching the Lord to remember how he had walked before him in truth, with a perfect heart, and done that which was good in his sight. (2 Kings 20:3.) At least, some of a self-righteous spirit, have been led to think from hence, that they have had somewhat in themselves whereof to glory. O! if we have walked well, and done well, we need not remind our Lord of it. If the heart be simple with its Saviour, it will not: for it was by his grace we did so. He who gives us grace, can never be unmindful of its effects.

We hear of Hezekiah's sickness—of the Lord's giving him a sign of restoration—of his sudden recovery—of his sweet experience—of the Lord's dealing with him in his sickness. (Isaiah 38.) Should we not next expect to hear of his perfect love, supreme affection to the Lord, and of his deepest humility before him? But, alas! we are told, "he rendered not again, according to the benefits done unto him." Why? Astonishing! For *his heart was lifted up*. O, what pride and vain-glory does he discover, in shewing to the princes of Babylon his vast treasure! Is this the man who so lately chattered like a crane or a swallow, and mourned like a dove;

whose eyes failed, and whose tongue cried out, "O, Lord! I am oppressed; undertake for me"? This he, who said, I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul? Yes, "God left him." O! if God leaves, then Satan tempts, and corruptions rage. What evils may not the best of men fall into? Saint, know thyself. Consider this. Why did God leave him? Why does he leave any of his dear children? *To try them.*—That they may have full proof of their weakness and vileness; that they may know *all* that was in their hearts. We know but little of the latent seeds of pride and wickedness in us. The Lord withdraws for a season: he suffers devilish pride to rear its cursed head, that he may wound it by the power of his grace, and bring the poor sinner to his feet, with Hezekiah, to humble himself for the pride of his heart. (verse 26.) Happy those in whom such effects are produced! for in them the grace of God, yea, the God of grace, is glorified.

My Lord, how wond'rous is thy love,
So long with me to bear!
A wretch so proud, who oft hath strove
Glory with thee to share.

Search me, O God! and try my heart,
Its vileness shew to me:
Cause all self-glorying to depart,
That I may humble be.

APRIL 24.

Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. Gen. 42:8.

How affecting is the history of Joseph! Who can read it without emotion of soul? What amazing scenes of Providence open to our view! Spiritual minds may see many things in it typical of our beloved Saviour. Here, Joseph's brethren are introduced to him, as governor of Egypt. He knew them: they knew not him. How does he deal with them? Does he instantly make himself known to them? No: though he had the most tender affections of heart to them, and wept tears of joy at the sight of them; yet he speaks roughly, and sends them to prison. Why this? to bring their sin to their mind, and to affect them for their cruelty towards him, with a deep sense of their guilt. See we not somewhat typical of the conduct of Christ, our brother in the flesh, in all this? (1st.) Christ knew us before we knew him: he knew us from eternity, when we were chosen in him, and given to him. (2d.) We never seek after him, or come to him, unless we find a famine in our hearts, and are ready to perish for want of the bread of life. (3d.) When we do come to him, does he instantly make himself known to us, and assure us that he is our Saviour? No: for a season he speaks with the authority of a *Governor*, causes his law to treat us roughly, threatening us with the prison of hell. Why? deeply to affect our souls with a sense of our sins and deserts. (4th.) It was some time, and many trying and afflicting scenes Joseph's brethren passed through, before he said, "*I am your brother.*" Did Joseph do them any real harm by all this? so our Jesus, though he proves us and tries us, and shews us what is in us, before he

gives us full assurance of his love and salvation; yet herein he intends nothing but real good to us. By all this, he teaches us humility. (5th.) Joseph's brethren did not at first come to him as their brother, but as the governor of Egypt: so we come perishing sinners to Christ; not as knowing that he is our brother, but believing him to be a Saviour, and praying him to save us. We have faith in him, before we have the assurance of his love to us, and know that we are his brethren. Lastly; All the blessings and comforts of Joseph's brethren flowed from his knowledge of them: so does all our safety and comfort, in time and eternity, spring from Christ's first knowing and loving us, as his brethren. Though true faith may be without special assurance of interest in Christ, yet Christ assures us, "I will manifest myself unto you." (John 14:21.)

'Tis all my comfort here below,
To know my Saviour's love:
This world, with all its pompous shew,
I leave for joys above.

APRIL 25.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not. 1 Cor. 15:34.

What St. Paul says of natural death, "Some are fallen asleep," (verse 6,) may be applied, in a spiritual sense, to professors. There are many such in this day. It is a very bad frame to live in and indulge. Such bring no honour to God, credit to the gospel, or profit to their brethren. One would think, such sit all the year under that word, and heartily obey it, "Sleep on, and take your rest." Can such be said to be running in the heavenly race, fighting the good fight of faith, wrestling with spiritual enemies, and pressing towards the mark, for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus? No; no more than a man in a midnight sleep, can be said to be active in worldly affairs. But, what is worst of all, such sleepers dream that all is safe, and well with them.

St. Paul, like a faithful watchman, cries out to such, *Awake*: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" What do they answer? "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding the hands to sleep." (Prov. 6:9, 10.) If you jog them, and strive to arouse them to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, they will answer in a sleepy fit, "We know the doctrines of grace; do not disturb us with your legal notions about sin and righteousness." Good Lord! keep our souls from such a dreadful frame. Take heed, O Christian, of such. Beware you get no harm from them, so as to catch the infection from them, and lie down to sleep by them. From whence do such sleepy frames proceed? (1st.) Says wisdom, "Slothfulness

casteth into a deep sleep." (Prov. 19:15.) Slothfulness in the ways of the Lord will bring on deep sleep of soul. (2d.) Sitting under drowsy, lethargic preachers, who aim more to fill the head with notions of light, than to warm the heart by the fire of love. (3d.) Love of the world, and eager pursuits after the riches, honours, and pleasures of it, are sleeping opiates to the soul. O Christian! consider the unintermitting zeal and activity of the Lord, for thy salvation! Wrestle hard with him, to quicken and keep thy soul alive to righteousness, that thou mayest not sin to dishonour him: but live and walk, love and obey, so as to glorify him. Lord, let us never lose our feeling convictions of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the dreadful effects of it upon our souls. O! let conscience rather smart with pain, than sleep in stupid security.

My God, awake my drowsy soul,
Important truths to see:
Do thou my ev'ry pow'r control,
To walk in love with thee.

The heavy chains of carnal sloth,
Lord, from my mind remove:
Make me to feel thy heav'nly truth,
In all its pow'r and love.

APRIL 26.

I will put a division between my people and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be. Exod. 8:23.

Thus speaks the sovereign Jehovah to the haughty, stubborn monarch Pharaoh. Loving children delight to treasure up in their memories the words of an affectionate father: they love to reflect on them, and draw comfort from them. O that we may do so to-night, by this speech of our heavenly Father! Consider, (1st.) here is a people distinguished from a people. The Lord has a people among a people, chosen out of a people. These he particularly calls his own—*my* people. They are so, by everlasting love, eternal choice, and covenant grace. (2d.) Though near and dear as they are to the Lord, yet they may for a season continue under the power of, and suffer oppression from their enemies. Though the love of the Lord's heart is ever set upon you, and the eye of his providence is ever over you, yet he may seem to leave you. O! tarry the Lord's leisure, and be strong. Though deliverance stay, yet wait for it: the Lord will surely appear. For, (3d.) the Lord puts a division between his people and others. He separates them by his power; calls them by his grace; and, according to his rich mercy, divides them from the wicked: or, as it is in the margin, puts a *redemption* between them. O, believer, there is not a plague which you deserve, and others suffer, but the redemption of Jesus stands between, has averted from you, and therefore can never fall upon you. Precious indeed, beyond conception of expression, is this redemption! It shall be manifest so to be; for, (4th.) there is a set-time for it. *To-morrow shall this sign be.* Ah, soul! to-day

thou seest the wicked in great prosperity—not burdened with sin, harassed with temptation, and bowed down with sorrow as thou art. Do not envy, but pity them. Remember thy Lord's words, to-morrow, and his sign. St. Paul gives it you, "In nothing be terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (Phil. 1:28.) O, study this precious text: there is much instruction in it. Have you adversaries for Christ's sake? It is now evident, they are in a state of perdition; but you of salvation. The Lord is at hand. O love, look, and long for his appearing. Rejoice in his cross, which is the sign of your salvation: by that you shall overcome. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. 6:14.) And see, that, while you glory in the cross, you likewise strive to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, in all things. Titus 2:10.

To-day the wicked, great and strong,
Hector the saints of God:
To-morrow God will change their song
In hell, their dark abode.

Cheer up my soul! Be not dismay'd;
Christ thy redemption is:
His sov'reign pow'r, his saving aid
Shall lead thy soul to bliss.

APRIL 27.

That your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment. Phil. 1:9.

The soul that is not concerned that it may be so with him, is not alive to God. We see many professors, who have lost a warm sense and comfortable feeling of divine truths. But are they deeply concerned for it? Do they earnestly wrestle with God, fervently crying out, O that it were with me as in months past? Alas! no: they say, We are not called to live upon our frames and feelings. Very true: neither, blessed be God! are we called to live without warm frames and comfortable feelings. O, let us beware, lest we despise the comforts of the Holy Ghost! Some professors, by their spirit and conduct, remind us of the fox in the fable, who lost his tail in a trap, and told his brethren he ran so much the lighter without it. So some, having lost their warm and lively feelings, think little about them, and seem to say, they can run well without them. Truly, so they do; but not in the ways of the Lord, but in the ways of the world, of sin, and folly. They awfully take up with other frames and feelings; not of a spiritual, but of a carnal and sensual nature.

O Christian! pity such. Bless the Lord, if he has kept you from thus falling, and that this text is the prayer of your soul. (1st.) "That your love may abound more and more." To whom? to the God of love; to the Son of his love; to the Spirit who sheds abroad his love; and to the children of his love: yea, with a love of pity to all men. O, this is a most precious frame to live and die in! But, (2d.) how is love to abound? (1st.) "In

knowledge." The more we know and believe the everlasting love of God the Father; the everlasting salvation of God the Son: and the everlasting consolation of God the Spirit, real love is increased to Jehovah and to our brethren in Christ. Do not set love before knowledge: do not think knowledge contrary to love, or that love abounds by ignorance. (2d.) "In all judgment," or sense and feeling, as in the margin of some bibles. Insensible love, unfelt love is a strange kind of passion. My dear brethren, you who, like me, have warm passions, let us pray God that our love may as sensibly be felt as our anger, and may daily abound over it: yea, over all our sins; over the love of the world; over every enemy to the love of our Christ, and to the glory of our God. "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind; live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13:11.

"Tis sweet by faith to know Christ's love,
As taught us by his sacred word:
'Tis sweeter still, when from above
We feel its comforts shed abroad.

Lord, make me daily know and feel
Religion's more than empty name:
'Tis love and joy unspeakable,
To live by faith upon the Lamb.

APRIL 28.

David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. 1 Sam. 27:1.

Who will say, that, from the nature and reason of things, David had not cause to think so? The king's wrath was incensed against him. "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: yea, as the roaring of a lion." (Prov. 16:14–19:12.) Saul wanted neither policy nor power to execute his cruel designs upon David: but only, he must have permission from David's Lord, before he could hurt a single hair of his head. Poor David's heart seems to forget this, when, in a fit of fear and frame of unbelief, he says, "I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul." Now, only think, "The Lord had appointed and anointed David to be king; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward." (chap. 16:12, 13.) Yet, we here find him doubting the truth of what had passed, giving way to unbelief, and suspecting that the Lord's purpose might be prevented, by Saul's malice in destroying him: as though Saul's arm was stronger to destroy, than the Lord's to save; or Saul's hatred against him greater than the Lord's love for him. What an enemy is unbelief to God's glory and the comfort of his beloved children! the holiest of God's saints are not totally freed from its distressing influence. See it in David; see it in thyself and be ashamed. For, art thou a David, a beloved of the Lord? art thou also anointed by the Spirit of the Lord, to be a king unto God? (Rev. 1:6.) Yet didst thou never say in thine heart, "I shall one day perish by the hand of mine enemies?" I shall never arrive at the kingdom of God? Yea, art thou thinking or saying so now? Then, be ashamed of

thyself, for thus dishonouring thy Lord's love, calling in question his grace, suspecting his power, and slighting his Spirit: as though the power of sin, Satan, and the world were greater than thy Lord's, and could frustrate his gracious purposes towards thee. O! think, it is the blood of the Son of God which hath redeemed thee from all thy sins: it was the Spirit of God that quickened thy soul, when dead in sins; it was his grace that brought thee to Jesus for salvation: and all this, because the Father loved thee with an everlasting love. Now, set all this against all the powers of sin and darkness, and say which is greatest? Who shall prevail? Look not to thy own strength. Depend not on thy own graces. Be not over elated by thy fine frames: be not dejected under dark ones. Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. (Isa. 26:4.)

How many fears our souls distress,
Thro' cursed unbelief?
Save us, O Lord, our righteousness,
From this malignant thief.

O, Lord! Give faith, and faith's increase,
To trust thee ev'ry hour,
That we may feel our hearts at ease,
Thro' thine almighty pow'r.

APRIL 29.

Believe in the LORD your GOD, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 2 Chron. 20:20.

Such was the advice of good old Jehosaphat, in a time of invasion by a powerful army. Precious words! at all times seasonable. What can a child of God desire on this side glory, so much as establishment of mind and prosperity of soul? Both are obtained by faith. As the mind is established, so the soul prospers. (1st.) What is implied in being established? It is to be fixed and settled in the confidence of our mind, and not to halt between two opinions, as those of old did, between God and an idol. (1 Kings 18:21.) To halt, is to be lame on both sides. Thus, their minds were in suspense, agitated between two objects, and not steadily fixed upon either. So many sincere souls are tossed to and fro, by every wind of doctrine. They are like children, not steadily fixed in their judgment, nor settled in their confidence *in* the Lord: yet they delight to hear the truths of God. In hearing, their souls are refreshed: but when hearing is over, their minds are shaken; their doubts and fears again return. O! see and rejoice; for, (2d.) the Lord himself is set forth as the object of our faith. Believe or trust in the Lord your God. Nothing can establish the soul but faith. Lord, increase our faith. And to prayer, we should add earnest diligence in searching the Scriptures, considering the freeness, fulness, and suitableness of the promises of the Lord to us. To believe *IN* the Lord, is to trust in, and repose our minds upon his covenant grace and love in Christ Jesus; to take him, as he has revealed himself, as our God just as little children do by their fathers. Their minds

have no doubt of their father's love to them. When they want any thing, they ask for it: when in sorrow, they tell him of it. And yet, what parent on earth has such a heart of love to his children, as our heavenly Father has to us? Did any one ever so freely, fully, and affectionately manifest it? Be ashamed of your unbelief, which keeps your souls from being established in his grace and truth. "It is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace." (Heb. 13:9.) Do we desire it, that our souls may prosper? Then, "believe his prophets." They testify of God the Father's love; of God the Son's salvation; and of peace and joy in God the Holy Ghost. Hear them, and your soul shall be established in grace: believe them, and your soul shall prosper in comfort.

How oft do fears beset my heart,
That I shall surely fall
A prey to Satan's deadly art,
And lose my Christ—my all!

Establish, Lord, my heart in faith,
Firm in thy truth to stand;
Daily to live on what thou saith,
While in this barren land.

APRIL 30.

Strong meat belongeth to them who are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Heb. 5:14.

It is almost impossible for any who are called to minister in holy things, or who write about the truths of God, to please every one. Babes, who are unskillful in the word of righteousness, can only like milk. They cry out against strong meat, it offends their stomach. But such should consider, (1st.) That they are not always to continue babes, to feed upon infant nutriment. The tender mother tries her infant, again and again, with meat, though its stomach heaves against it, and it has not the art to swallow it. So they must learn to eat strong meat, that they may grow thereby. (2d.) God's children are not all of equal age, therefore strong meat is as necessary for adult men, as milk is for babes; those of full age, or *perfect*. Not so, compared with the perfect law of God. There is no one upon earth perfect, in this sense, though many, through perfect ignorance of the law, and themselves, pretend to it. But *perfect* in comparison of babes, respecting the knowledge of the everlasting, electing, immutable love of God in Christ, to sinners—of his freely and fully justifying, and eternally glorifying them, through the blood and righteousness of his Son—and of his effectually calling and sanctifying them, by his Spirit, etc. Therefore, (3d.) The most deep and strong truths of God, are held forth in scripture, as strong meat to nourish, comfort, and build up such, who are of full age. Hence it becomes those who labour in the word, to give each their portion; that neither babes on

one hand, nor strong men on the other, should have reason to find fault. Babes should not expect the strong to come back to their food; but they should press forward to maturity. How is this to be attained? (1st.) "By reason of use." Constantly searching the scriptures, and hearing them opened and explained. Just as a learner uses his grammar, which contains the rudiments of the language he wants to attain. He cannot get forward without it. He must be perfect in it. He is never to forget its rules. (2d.) "By the exercise of the senses." The internal ones of understanding and judgment. "*Seeing Jesus.*" (Heb. 2:9.) "*Hearing* his voice." (John 10:3.) "*Smelling* the sweet odour of his love. "His name is as an ointment poured forth." (Song. 1:3.) "*Tasting* that the Lord is gracious." (1 Pet. 2:3.) "*Handling* the word of life and salvation as held forth in the Gospel." (1 John 1:1.) Thus exercising our senses on Christ, we grow strong to trust him. We discern that all good is in him, and all evil is without him.

From blest experience may we prove
The wisdom of God's righteous ways,
Who feeds with meat that's from above,
According to our strength and days.

MAY 1.

They shall take to them every man a lamb. Ex. 12:3.

This was God's appointed means of salvation, in a night of sore destruction. It was a display of the sovereignty of God, and the obedience of faith. Lord, enable us to bow to the one, and to learn more and more of the other. Consider, (1st.) The sovereignty of God in his *severity* upon his enemies, and in his *goodness* to his people: in *destroying* all the first-born of the former, and in *preserving* every one of the latter. And this was in a way appointed by his sovereign mercy. There is no mercy from God to any sinner, but in the way he himself appoints. This was a *lamb*. "They shall take to them every man a *lamb*." His flesh was to be their food, his blood their salvation. Would not taking the flesh and blood of any other creature have answered the same end? No: To attempt it would have been a direct act of unbelief of God's word, and disobedience to his will. Such a soul would have brought upon himself swift destruction. O beware, lest you turn your eyes from the Lamb of God. There is salvation in no other. See, (2d.) The obedience of faith. We do not find one Israelite destroyed. They believed God's word, and obeyed it. They did not dare to reply against God and say, What doest thou? Why wilt thou destroy so many souls in one night? Why take a lamb, and sprinkle his blood as our protection? Why institute this sign to us only, and not to the Egyptians also? Why not give them at least a chance of salvation? Is this just? O the power of faith! It prevents such arrogant speeches. The grace of faith in the heart, subdues the enmity of the carnal mind, bows the rebellious will, stills the turbulency of nature, brings

peace to the conscience, and love to the heart: For it takes and feeds upon the flesh, and trusts alone in the blood of *the Lamb of God*, who taketh away the sin of the world. This is God's appointed way of salvation. O how simple, how happy is the believing soul! God and he are perfectly agreed. God says, "Take the Lamb, my beloved Son, as my free gift for your whole salvation." The Lamb says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John 6:55.) And the obedient sinner says, Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief. Dost thou believe? Hast thou experienced this? Then bless the loving Spirit, for the gift of precious faith! Faith is the gift of God. Feed by faith on the Lamb of God. Thus take, thus receive, thus live upon Christ and his fulness every day on earth, till you see his face in glory. Yet a little while and he shall come. Heb. 10:37.

There is salvation in the LAMB,
For sinners doom'd to die:
I glory in his precious name,
And to his blood I fly.

Christ is my food; my robe, my joy,
I take him thus by faith:
No foes can e'er my soul destroy,
I credit what he saith.

MAY 2.

If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. 1 Pet. 4:16.

“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” (Acts 11:26.) It is a blessed name. We ought ever to glory in it, and never be ashamed of it. But the bare name will no more avail us in life, death, and judgment, than to be called rich, while we are feeling the pinching hand of want. Christ signifies anointed. He was anointed to be our Saviour. (Acts 10:38.) All who are saved by him, and come to him, are his anointed ones. So St. John speaks of all Christ’s living members. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One.” (1 John 2:20.) To anoint, is to consecrate and set apart for holy and spiritual purposes. Christians are consecrated and set apart from the rest of the world, to be a people peculiarly devoted to the glory of Jesus. They are the jewels which compose his mediatorial crown. Are you thus highly honoured by the Lord of life and glory? Is your soul anointed by the Spirit of Christ? Then verily the world will also anoint you with their spirit. The more the unction of the Holy One is manifest, in your walk and conversation, so much the more will the wicked one and his children traduce and blacken your character with reproach and infamy. Thus you will be sure to suffer as a Christian; at least in your good name. This must be cast out as evil. Only take heed that you suffer as a Christian. That it be for confessing Christ, and adorning his gospel. As you love Christ, and have a tender concern for his glory, O let him not be wounded, and his cause dishonoured, by any unholy, unjust, immoral actions, etc. Remember, the men of the world are

vulture-eyed to your faults, glad to espy, and eager to proclaim them, with an air of triumph, saying, "See here, these are your Christians." But if you really do suffer as a Christian, who have given up yourself, to be a disciple of Christ, art following him in the regeneration, and therefore are the butt of contempt, and a mark to be shot at, by the profane wit of ungodly men, be not ashamed: Be not confounded: Do not hang down your head with fear, but look up to God with joy. Glorify him for thus honouring you. Remember on whose behalf you suffer. Put all your sufferings for Christ to his account. You have Christ's note of hand: He will surely pay it. But, if you are ashamed, it is a sign you cannot credit him. What! is the credit of Jesus, the God of truth, bad in your eyes? Be ashamed, for want of faith to trust him. Meditate often on that day, when Christ shall come, in the glory of his Father, to confess them, who now confess him. Luke 12:8.

Dear Lord, who suffered once for me,
Upon the shameful cross,
So fill my mind with love to thee,
To count no shame my loss.

MAY 3.

With his stripes we are healed. Isa. 53:5.

A great professor once said to me, "I can never conceive how one man can be made righteous, by the righteousness of another." Thus his carnal reason led him to object against Christ's righteousness being imputed to us. I replied, why then do you profess to believe, that your sins can be washed away by the blood of another? He was silent. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Too great a mystery for human reason to comprehend: but not too great for divine faith to receive, to the joy of godliness. Sin is a malignant and mortal disease. The soul must die eternally of it, unless healed. This healing the soul, is the pardoning of sin. This is obtained by the stripes of Christ. You feel the evil of sin; you mourn over the guilt of sin; you groan under the burden of indwelling sin, from day to day. The Spirit of truth, the *Comforter*, here holds forth a blessed remedy for you to look to, for pardon of sin, peace of conscience, and healing of soul: *The Stripes of Jesus*. Just as though the Lord proclaimed to a world of diseased sinners, "This is your only remedy, so sure as you are sinners, and feel sin in your nature; so truly did the Son of God take upon him the *same* nature—had all your sins laid upon, and imputed to him, and in that nature was cursed by the law as a malefactor, wounded, bruised, and put to death by divine justice, as the greatest sinner by imputation, that ever lived: that hereby your sins, all your sins, might be fully pardoned, and your souls as perfectly healed of the disease of sin, as though it had never infected you. Look to any thing but the stripes of Christ, and you will

be miserable. Look to these, only and alone, and you shall find health, joy, and salvation." Sin-sick soul, What sayest thou to this? "Lord, increase my faith." This is a precious prayer. That dear Lord who suffered stripes for thy sin, that thou mightest be healed: that dear Spirit, who convinced thee of sin, and made thee sick of sin, will surely answer the prayer of faith, and give thee the joy of faith, and thou shalt say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases." (Psalm 103:2, 3.) O what a marvellous way is this of healing our souls! It is God's way. Unconvinced sinners care not about it. Proud, self-righteous souls reject it. Licentious spirits abuse it. Believing, humble hearts rejoice in it, give Christ the glory of it, and walk worthy of the Lord, to all pleasing. Col. 1:10.

Strict justice, Christ hath satisfied,
By pains, and stripes, and death:
By these our souls are justified,
And comforted in faith.

This is the faith which works by love
Of our dear suff'ring Lord:
It lifts our souls to joys above,
While it believes his word.

MAY 4.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Eph. 6:13.

St. Paul was an experienced veteran in the camp of Christ. He had been in many campaigns: fought many battles under the Captain of his salvation, against the combined enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. He warns his fellow soldiers of their foes and dangers, by exhorting them to take, and put on, nothing less than the whole armour of God. The very same armour, which he himself fought in, is provided for us also. Blessed be God for that. So sure as Paul fought his way through, and safely arrived in glory, so shall we also, in this armour of God. O Christian, consider, this is not an armour of flesh and blood—not what is natural to man, or is in the power of man to provide for himself; but the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of the whole earth, hath provided it for all Christ's soldiers. What is this armour of God? It is the Son of his love, the Lord Jesus himself. He is the Christian's whole and complete armour. In Christ alone he stands his ground, fights and conquers every enemy. Without Christ we can do nothing but faint and fly. Take this whole armour: put it on, saith St. Paul. Christ is yours. He is the gift of God to you. "*Put on the Lord Jesus.*" (Rom.13:14.) Just as one puts on an armour for defence, so take, put on, arm your minds with the whole person of Christ, his love, righteousness, and atonement, all his offices, yea, the whole salvation of Christ. This, and nothing but this, what Christ is to us, and hath done for us, is proof against every enemy, in the evil day of battle.

That ye may be able to stand. O soldier, Christ is your strength. Your standing is by his power. *Against all the wiles of the devil.* Is Satan very cunning and very powerful; full of force and fraud? Is he too much for you to resist and conquer? Remember Christ is your whole armour. All wisdom lies in the head. Christ is your head. He is to you made wisdom. All courage comes from the heart. "Christ dwells there by faith." (Eph. 3:17.) Thus armed, you are a match, an over match for the devil, and proof against all his devices. You can never fall, fail, or be wounded, while fighting in his armour. "For you shall be strengthened by the Spirit's might, in the inner man." Satan must first wound Christ, before he can reach you: first conquer Christ, before he can conquer you. O then Christian, look at your armour, not at your weak, defenceless self. Be strong. Be of good courage. Shout your victory, *more than* conquerors, through Christ who loved us. Rom. 8:37.

Without the armour of my God,
I cannot stand against one foe;
O may I daily put it on,
And thereby vanquish ev'ry woe.

MAY 5.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness. Eph. 6:14.

Soldiers of Christ! hear and obey the word of command: *Stand.* Against every enemy, stand to your arms: against all opposition from within and without, maintain your ground. Face all: fight all: conquer all. Does sin attack, Satan assault, the world threaten? Do corruptions rage, temptations beset, and carnal nature rebel? Are thine enemies many and potent? is their fury great? is the battle strong? *Stand* therefore. Why? Because you have put on the whole armour of God. Jesus is with you, upon you, over you, and engaged for you: therefore, "Stand fast in the Lord." (1 Thess. 3:8.) "And in the power of his might: *having your loins girt.*" Long standing makes the loins faint and weak. Is there much pain in the loins? Here is thy Lord's command: "Gird up the loins of thy mind." Make thy loins strong. "Fortify thy power mightily." (Nahum 2:1.) How? Here is a girdle for thee: *Girt about with truth.* What is truth? Christ answers, "*I am the truth.*" (John 14:6.) Christ, and the truth as it is in him, is like a girdle to the loins, to brace up and strengthen the mind. Hast thou not often found it so, O soldier of Christ? When weary and faint in thy mind, under long and sharp conflicts with the enemy, hath not thy soul been revived, and thy mind animated with fresh strength and vigour, by again girding thy loins with the love, the grace, the truth, and the salvation of Jesus? This was David's experience: "Thou hast girded me with gladness." (Psalm 30:11.) "Thou hast girded me with strength to battle." (2 Sam. 22:40.) O! think not of standing, without the girdle of

truth. Let Christ and his truths be the strength of thy loins and the glory of thy soul. "*Having on the breastplate of righteousness.*" Not our own: that is defective. As well have on a spider's web: it will not defend the heart. The enemy will wound the breast through it. No other righteousness than that in which we stand perfectly justified in the sight of God, can effectually defend our breast against the enemy. This is the one perfect, everlasting righteousness of him, who is *the Lord our righteousness*. (Jer. 23:6.) Christ, by his obedience unto death, wrought it out; the Spirit convinces us of our want of it; God the Father imputes it; the sinner accepts it by faith, glories of it, and rejoices in it. No enemy can stand against it: It is a guard against, and repels the accusations of Satan, and is security against all condemnation.

If I could keep God's holy law,
And ev'ry jot fulfil,
My righteousness I would not know,
But glory in Christ still.

But since I sin in all I do,
And yet would never sin,
I'll daily to my Saviour go,
For peace and joy within.

MAY 6.

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Eph. 6:15.

Soldiers of Christ, you are not only commanded to *stand* against every enemy, but to march on: to follow the Captain of your salvation, in the way to eternal glory. Here you must expect the enemy will strive to retard your march. He will strew the road with difficulties and entanglements—with briars and thorns—make it rugged, and almost impassable, as though every step was upon sharp stones and goading spikes. Your feet must be shod, or you will halt when you should march: turn back when you should go forward. “No one can make a shoe to the creature’s foot, so as he shall go on easy, in a hard way, but Christ. He can do it to the soldier’s full content. How doth he it? Truly, no other way than underlaying it: or, if you will, lining it with the peace of the gospel. What though the way be set with sharp stones? If this shoe go between the Christian’s foot and them, they cannot be much felt.” Gurnal’s *Christian Armour*.—Shod with the *preparation*. Dr. Gill observes, this word signifies a base or foundation. Says St. Paul, “other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 3:11.) Christ was laid as the only foundation of a sinner’s peace, in the everlasting council and covenant by Jehovah in Trinity. Peace is preached by him in the gospel of peace. When the heart has a solid, scriptural, experimental knowledge of this by faith, it cries out with joy, “He is our peace.” (Eph. 2:14.) “We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1.) This peace in the heart, becomes, as it were, shoes to

the feet, to enable the Christian soldier to trample upon every difficulty and danger, and to run the way of God's commands with love and delight. For saith the Lord, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass": Proof against every obstacle, and preservation from every hindrance in the way. "And as thy days so shall thy strength be." (Deut. 33:25.) Thy days are all in Christ. Thy strength to walk on is from him. Thy Captain, O soldier, sees thy every conflict, eyes thee in every difficulty and danger, and according to his rich love and marvellous grace, has given thee exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partaker of the divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Therefore,

March on, nor fear to win the day,
Tho' death and hell obstruct the way.

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Col. 2:6, 7.

The gospel brings the joyful news,
Of peace with God thro' Christ:
This as it were supplies with shoes
To stand, and foes resist.

When peace of God prevails within,
We march on steadily,
Defying Satan, world, and sin,
Complete in victory.

MAY 7.

Above all, taking the shield of faith. Eph. 6:16.

When Christ has the heart, it will say, if I can see nothing of Christ in the text, that text is nothing to me. Here is a shield of defence. What is it? A mere assent of the mind? A cold consent of the tongue, to some certain propositions? Is this the shield of faith, which will cover my head, and defend my heart in the day of battle? Is it believing a system of doctrines, without having the heart warmed with love, or the life influenced by the power of them, that the apostle exhorts me above all to take? O no, nothing less is this shield of faith than Christ, precious Christ. Never, never have any idea of faith, without including its author and object. Otherwise it is a mere non-entity: a notion which has no real existence but in fancy. When we hear people insist, that *faith* is our righteousness—that faith is imputed to us for righteousness, we are led to think they take up, and are in love with some fancied excellence in themselves, instead of the excellence and glory of *the Lord our Righteousness*. It is him the grace of faith ever exalts. Have you faith? Is Christ the glory and excellence of your faith, and of your heart? Then above all, or over all things else, take this shield of faith. Fiery darts, shot from the burning malice of hell, are flying thick around us. Such as strong temptations exciting burning lusts, blasphemous injections, horrid thoughts of God, debasing thoughts of Christ, distressing and despairing ones of the hope of salvation by him. O how do these fiery darts of the enemy tend to burn up the peace, hope, consolation, and joy of the soul. Ah, says Satan, you a child of God—you a believer

in Christ—you an heir of glory—your faith is fancy, your hope delusion. You are a cursed sinner in all you do. You had better give over your profession, give up your hope, and enjoy yourself in the world, for all your expectations are only vain. What can the poor sinner say? How repel, how quench such fiery darts? Only by taking the shield of faith. Holding up the work of Jesus for him against them all. My Saviour's blood atoned for my sins—his blood cleansed from *all* sin—all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven—in his righteousness I am justified from ALL things—there is NOW NO condemnation to me, for I am IN Christ Jesus. All this I believe. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?

Not faith, but Christ alone's my shield;
By faith I him confess:
I stand unconquer'd in the field,
For he's my righteousness.

Father, I bless thee for thy Son,
And thou O Spirit, for thy faith,
And Christ for all which thou hast done,
For vict'ry over death.

MAY 8.

And take the helmet of salvation. Eph. 6:17.

It is excellently said, "Resolve for hardships, or lay down thine arms. Few come at the beat of Christ's drum to his standard. Many that list by external profession under him, after a while drop away and leave his colours. It is suffering work they are sick of. Many men are more tender of their skin than of their conscience. They had rather the gospel had provided armour to defend their bodies from death and danger, than their souls from sin and Satan." Gurnal's *Christian Armour*.—All this is, because they have not on the helmet of salvation. What is this? "For an helmet, the hope of salvation." (1 Thess. 5:8.) Do not all naturally hope to be saved? Yes, some in one way, and some in another. But all natural hopes are false hopes. Therefore they die and perish. But this helmet is a supernatural and divine hope. All men have not faith. Therefore they have not Christ, who is the helmet of hope. "The Lord Jesus is our hope." (1 Tim. 1:1.) We have received him into our hearts by faith. He is the *only* hope of our souls. Now soldier, you are daily, and every day, to take and put on this precious helmet of salvation, that you may lift up your head in every day of battle. Ever lay this down as a fixed maxim in your heart, *whatever grace the Spirit works in you, hope, love, etc. it is, that you should exalt Christ the Lord of all grace, out of whose fulness you receive grace for grace.* Mind this. You are not to live upon hope as a grace within you; but to take Christ, all that he is to you, and has done for you, as the object of your hope, and the helmet of your salvation. Many are apt to look more to, and trust more in

graces in themselves, than Christ giving himself for them. The Spirit does nothing in us to glorify us, but to glorify Jesus, to endear him to us, and that we should glory more and more of him, and in him. *Take* this helmet, for this keeps hope alive in the heart. It is of continual use to us. We are in perpetual danger. It defends the head. It makes the heart happy. Inspires with courage. Fortifies the mind, and purifies the life. No wonder then the enemy strives to rob us of the comfort of hope. No marvel, the Spirit, the Comforter, commands us to take, put on, and keep on, this blessed helmet of salvation, the work of Christ, which is our finished salvation. In that we stand perfect and complete, in the will of God. This will guard our heads against corrupt doctrines, and give courage to our hearts in the heat of battle, against affliction and distress. "Hope thou in God." Psalm 42:5.

In thy salvation, O my Lord,
May I ever stand complete;
'Tis this doth peace and joy afford,
This is my only helmet.

This helmet doth my head defend,
From all deceit and error:
Gives courage to my heart and hand,
'Gainst Satan's rage and terror.

MAY 9.

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD. Eph. 6:17.

Soldiers of Christ, all hail! Happy ye. Christ is your whole armour. (1st.) Christ who is *the truth*, is the strength of your loins: his righteousness is your breast-plate of defence. (2d.) He is the sum and substance of the gospel of peace, whereby our feet are shod to march against the enemy. (3d.) The author and object of faith. Our shield, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (4th.) Our helmet of hope. Thus, by the grace of the Spirit, put him on as your armour. Then, what dangers may you not face? What enemies have you to fear? But forget not your *sword*. Though but just entered the field, you must know the use of it, and necessity for it. It is offensive to your enemy. Defensive of yourself. What a poor figure would a soldier cut in the field of battle without his sword? Just so would you, without *the sword of the Spirit*: called *the word of God*. For, (1st.) By it he conquers the pride of our hearts, the self-righteousness of our spirits, and the rebellion of our nature, against Christ and his salvation. (2d.) He furnishes us with it, and enables us to gain victory by it over our corrupt reason, the injections of Satan, and the objections of carnal men, against the mystery of Christ, hope in him, and salvation by him. *Take* this sword. Hold fast the faithful word. Abide by it. Stand to it. As a centinel, with this sword in thine hand, guard thy heart against every intruding, insulting foe: all the lying accusations, soul dejecting, Christ dishonouring suggestions of Satan. Not only so, but like Esau, "By thy sword thou shalt live." Live; upon what thy sword

brings in from day to day, out of the precious word of God: out of the fulness of the grace of Jesus, and the precious promises in him. Having such an armour, the Lord forbid, that we should be like "the children of Ephraim, who turned back in the day of battle." (Psa. 75: 9.) Lord strengthen us that we may never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and so continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives end. Is this the one desire of your soul? O bless the Spirit for it. Hold fast the sword which he hath put into your hand. Hold up, thus saith the Lord—thus it is written, against every foe. Neither men nor devils can stand against the word of the Lord. "It is sharper than any two-edged sword." Heb. 4:12.

O may thy word, thy precious word,
My Saviour and my God,
Against my foes, fresh help afford,
All thro' this dang'rous road.

Spirit divine, teach me the art
Thy blessed sword to wield,
That I thereby may guard my heart,
And ever keep the field.

MAY 10.

Praying always with all prayer. Eph. 6:18.

A person by way of banter, once said to me, "I will treat you with a play, if you will go with me to-night." I thanked him, and told him, I would accompany him, if I could be sure it would bring more of the love of Christ into my heart. This, this is worth living for, using any means to promote, and going any where to procure. But, here is a weapon, which defends us against all temptations to go to such places, or do such things as are contrary to the peace of our souls, and which tend to damp the love of Christ in our hearts. That soul, who keeps up sweet fellowship with God, at a throne of grace, is dead to sensual gratifications. The more prayer, the more spiritual life from Christ. The more spiritual life, the more prayer to Christ. *Praying.* This is the last weapon of our warfare: it will be used by soldiers at the last moment of life. God be merciful to me a sinner: Jesus save or I perish, are suitable petitions for a dying soldier of Christ. We are sure such prayer of faith, God will answer. *Praying always.* We are prone to think, we are not always in a fit frame to pray. Who but Christ can put our soul in a better? Therefore pray him to do it. "I am oppressed," said Hezekiah. What then! Did he cease to pray? No. "O Lord, undertake for me." (Isa. 38:14.) The undertaking of Jesus we want always. Therefore, should pray for it always. *With all prayer.* Every kind of prayer. Though armed with the whole armour of God, yet no victory without the power of God. The most secret sigh of the soul is heard by God, as well as the loudest cry of the tongue. If your lot is cast into the worst of company, there your heart

may pray. God can hear. You then ought to pray—That God my keep you. Are you low in your frame, and uncomfortable in your soul? Why is this? That you should call upon the Lord. Do you fear your enemy will prevail? Improve fears into prayers. Call on the Saviour. The more prayer, the more victory. The more victory, the more love. Love is heaven below. Thus we go on conquering and to conquer. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Praying souls may joyfully shout victory over death, and all things, "More than conquerors through him who loved us." (Rom. 8:37.) Is this the state? This the faith of praying Christians? Who brought them into this happy state, this joyful faith? The question excites gratitude, and calls forth praise to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Heb. 12:2.

Our Captain loves to hear
His soldiers' praying voice;
Courage he gives, forbids our fear;
Commands us to rejoice.

MAY 11.

There is one body and one Spirit. Eph. 4:4.

St. Paul exhorts saints to a holy, loving, peaceful walk. He knew nothing could effect this, like the consideration, that they all composed one body, of which the holy, loving, peaceful Jesus is the head. While the power of this truth lives in the heart, love prevails in holiness before God and peace with our brethren. Then, in sweet fellowship, we say, with Abraham to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee—for we are brethren." (Gen. 13:8.) *There is one body.* Saith our Lord, "A *body* hast thou prepared me." (Heb. 10:5.) As Christ had a natural body, formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, which he was to inhabit, in which he was to atone for sin, fulfil all righteousness, and make intercession for transgressors; so he has also a mystical body, chosen and given him by God the Father: in and over all these he is head. This is a sweet word. "God gave Christ to be *Head* over all *things* to the church, which is his body." (Eph. 1:22.) Believing sinner, art thou a member of his blessed body, united to this ever precious, ever glorious Head? Envy not monarchs. Covet not more. Study thy dignity. Live like thyself. Glory in thy Head. Look down with contempt, on all things below Christ and heaven. *There is one Spirit.* He flows from the Head: hath united us to the Head. Makes us like the Head; and causes us to rejoice in the Head. For Christ is all, and in all his members. By this one Spirit he animates, guides, and comforts them. Learn hence, (1st.) to love and praise God, for the gift of Jesus, to be all things to us. (2d.) To glory of, and rejoice in Christ our Head, who has done all for us,

and is all to us. "For in him we are *complete*." (Col. 2:10.) (3d.) Give glory to the loving Spirit, who convinced us of sin, shewed us Christ, united our hearts to him by faith, and causes us to look to, live upon, and be comforted by Jesus, our covenant Head. (4th.) Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace between Christ and his members. Saints' strifes are Satan's sport; they grieve the Spirit, and distress our minds. As we expect to live together with our Head above, let us follow the things which make for peace, and wherewith one may edify another below. (Rom. 14:10.) The power of this faith, of being one with Christ, is most amazing. It works by the love of Christ, produces love to him, and to all his members, as being one in him. Lord, increase our faith!

United unto Christ our head,
By the dear Spirit's pow'r,
We feed on him our living bread,
And wait his coming hour.

'Twill not be long before Christ come,
We hear our Bridegroom's voice;
He made us one, he'll take us home;
My soul, in this rejoice.

MAY 12.

Ye are called in one hope of your calling. Eph. 4:4.

What a glorious day was that to Saul, when the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, *I am Jesus*, your Saviour! Says one, "O that I were as sure that Christ hath called me, as he did St. Paul! Then, how happy should I be!" Verily, thou mayest be happy: thou mayest be as sure, thou art as effectually called as the apostle was. Thy concern of mind about it is a clear evidence, and full proof of it. While in a state of natural ignorance and unbelief, had St. Paul a single wish, or desire, to be called by Christ? Nor wouldst thou, if he had not first called thee by the grace of his word, and the power of his Spirit. Therefore, doubt not of, but rejoice in the hope of thy calling. Love Christ for calling thee. Give him the glory of it. *Ye are called.* The effects prove it. Ye who were dead in sin, without hope in Christ, have ears to hear the word of Christ, eyes to see the glory of Christ, a heart to desire Christ, as your only hope and salvation. His day of call was his day of power, when you were made willing to have but *one hope*. As there is but *one* atonement for sin—but *one* righteousness to justify from sin—*one* Mediator between God and sinners—but *one* Advocate to plead for sinners—but *one* Jesus to save: and but *one* Spirit, to sanctify sinners: so there is but *one* and the same *hope* in every called sinner. They all hope for heaven, because God has declared it to be by his free gift to sinners, through his ONE beloved and only Son. Are we called in this *one* hope? Then, (1st.) let us not be looking for any thing in us, nor done by us: neither to graces wrought in us, nor works done by us, as our hope. This would

exalt pride against our dear Saviour, "Who is our one and only *hope*." (1 Tim. 1:1.) (2d.) Let us not be dejected or discouraged, though we find ourselves imperfect creatures, unprofitable servants, yea miserable sinners. For that were to depreciate the atonement and righteousness of Christ: as though one was not fully available to take away our sins, and the other not perfectly sufficient to justify our persons, and make us acceptable to God. Blessed be God, at all times, under all circumstances, our hope is one and invariably the same; therefore, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." (Rom. 5:5.) Well, Christian, if thou art in possession of this one hope, thou hast constant reason for joy in God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And am I called to hope in Christ,
The face of God to see?
Then my base lusts I will resist,
And from all evil flee.

But thine's the pow'r, O God of might,
With strength my soul endue;
Let faith and love sweetly unite,
While heav'n I keep in view.

MAY 13.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism. Eph. 4:5.

Jesus saith of his church, "My dove, my undefiled is but one." (Song 6:9.) One body, composed of various members, espoused to him, by the Spirit, as "to *one* husband." (2 Cor. 11:2.) Hence called his own body, (Eph. 1:23.) All such are most dear to the Lord. He nourisheth and cherisheth them. For they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, (5:30.) He is their *one* Lord, and his name is ONE, (Zech. 14:9.) This is most true in doctrine. But this is not all. For it is found most sweet in experience also. This is by *one faith*. By this, we enjoy and walk in sweet and holy fellowship with our Lord and Head. What if I were told, there is one sun, what comfort would that afford me, if I never were to see its light, feel its warmth, and enjoy its influence? Whatever is written of our *one* Lord, I enjoyed in experience by this *one* faith. But some talk of various sorts of faith, as faith of adherence, faith of reliance, faith of assurance, etc. This only puzzles the head, and perplexes the heart of many sincere disciples of Christ, to define such notions. This one faith is very simple. By it the heart fixes upon the one atonement, the one righteousness, the one mediation, and the one salvation of the Son of God. As it looks to nothing else for hope: so by it Christ is most precious to the soul: and by faith Christ keeps the soul unto salvation. Happy partakers of this one faith! How are we made thus happy in *one* Lord, through *one* faith? By *one* baptism, of the Spirit, into the saving knowledge of, and joyful hope in Jesus our Saviour. "For by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. 12:13.) Water baptism

is only the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of the Holy Ghost, in this one baptism. O that the dear members of this one Lord, studied more to provoke each other to love, and good works, instead of disputing about the outward sign of baptism. The cold water of strife and contention, can never warm the heart with love to Christ, and one another. Being all ONE in Christ, let our one contention be, to live in the Spirit, and walk in love. The Lord baptize us with the fire of love! This will burn up the unhallowed strife of nature. Though we cannot think alike about baptism, yet if we have one Lord and one faith, we can, we ought to unite in this, to *love as brethren*. (1 Pet. 3:8.) Love is a genuine fruit of the Spirit, (Gal. 5:22.) A grace, which neither carnal men nor apostate devils ever can possess; is therefore a sure evidence, that we are born of God, and dwell in God. For love is of God. 1 John 4:7.

Baptize us by thy Spirit, Lord,
With holy faith and heav'nly love,
So shall we best proclaim abroad,
That we resemble saints above.

O may it be our greatest strife,
Who most shall honour thee our Lord,
With love of heart, and holy life,
Agreeable unto thy word.

MAY 14.

Now the just shall live by faith. Heb. 10:38.

Then they will highly prize the word of God. "For by that faith cometh." (Rom. 10:17.) Prophets and apostles, Old Testament saints and New Testament believers speak by one and the same Spirit, one and the same language, of one and the same life. "The just shall live by his faith," says Habak. 2:4. Mind, It is not said, the just, or the justified sinner, shall live *for* his faith. This would be to substitute faith in the room of its blessed object, Jesus who saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also. (John 14:19.) Nor is it said, he shall live *upon* his faith. We are too apt to look more to, and live more upon, what we think faith, which is rather the feelings of sense, than upon Christ, the object of faith. It is said of Esau, "By thy sword shalt thou live." (Gen. 27:40.) To have lived *upon* his sword, would have been hard food indeed. But he lived upon the precious morsels his sword brought in. So the believing sinner, justified in the righteousness of Christ, is to live, as we say, from hand to mouth; upon what faith brings into his mind, from the word of Christ, day by day. Eternal praise to the Holy Spirit, who quickened our once dead souls to this holy spiritual life. And he says, "We *shall* live by faith." This demands fresh praise every moment, while we thus live in Christ, and upon Christ, by faith. *Shall live*. What is implied in this? Even that this faith shall never be lost, nor the soul of any justified sinner perish: for he is in Christ, who is the *way* to the kingdom, the *truth* of the kingdom, and the *life* of all

who are chosen to inherit the kingdom. Hast thou faith, though but as a grain of mustard seed? Consider not thy faith, though weak, but the author and object of it, Jesus who is almighty to save. Though, under the sentence of death for sin in thyself; yet in him thou hast righteousness and justification unto eternal life. Lord, increase our faith, that we may live more above with thee in heart and affection, in conquest over sin, victory over the world, triumph over the accusations of Satan, the condemnation of the law, and the terrors of death. Thus the life of faith is a life of present peace, precious love, joyful hope, and holy obedience: For Christ is our life. O let us take heed lest we draw back from this our most holy, humble faith, either to self-righteousness on one hand, or ungodliness on the other. Both these oppose the life of faith, the joy of hope, and the comforts of love, which are in Christ Jesus.

Some trust on works, some trust on faith,
And some don't trust at all:
O may I live on what Christ saith,
That's the best life of all.

Faith makes Christ precious to the heart,
Embracing *him* within:
That soul has learnt the heavenly art,
Who lives on nought but HIM.

MAY 15.

But some are fallen asleep. 1 Cor. 15:6.

It is the united testimony of faithful witnesses, that Jesus is risen indeed. But what is this truth of a risen Saviour, to a dead sinner? He hears it, but without any affections of heart, joy of soul, desires to rise with Christ, or hopes of enjoying him. But when, by the grace of Christ, the soul is quickened to know him, then the believer rejoices in his resurrection, as the best news that ever saluted his ears, or reached his heart. Then, he delights to read the testimony of the witnesses, to this glorious event. Yea, he also becomes a witness of it himself, for he has an inward testimony of it by faith. My heart has felt joy on seeing Charity-children at Easter, with this label upon their breast, *He is risen*. It is this blessed truth, which changes the king of terrors, into an angel of comfort: turns that frightful monster, death, into the image of sweet sleep. For Christ died for OUR sin, and rose again for OUR justification. So sure as by faith, we now live in Jesus; so at death, we shall fall asleep in Jesus, and awake in his presence, in his perfect likeness, to behold his eternal glory. O what a sweet, what a refreshing sleep is this to souls, wearied and fatigued with the burden of sin, the temptations of Satan, the exercises of the flesh, the trials of the world, the cruelty of enemies, etc. But, melancholy truth! the apostle's words are verified of some of Christ's witnesses, in another sense. "Some are fallen asleep" spiritually. They are fallen from living actings of faith, lively exercises of grace, lively discharge of duty, living, loving, and walking with heaven in their eye, and Christ in their hearts, into dull, heavy, sleepy frames of souls.

O this is very dishonourable to Christ, uncomfortable to themselves, and great concern to lively, warm-hearted disciples! This is brought on some by sitting under a sleepy ministry. This scripture adage is fulfilled, "Like priest, like people." Worldly company, carnal pleasures and profits are sleepy opiates to the soul. O let us be concerned, that we sleep not as do others. Let us attend lively, warm-hearted, soul-searching ministers. Keep company with such sorts of Christians. Avoid light, trifling, drowsy, speculative professors. Let us cry to our Beloved. He has said, "I will cause the lips of those who are asleep to speak." (Song 7:9.) They shall speak, (1st.) to God in earnest prayer, to be kept from sleeping frames. (2d.) To their brethren in Christ, to animate and quicken them to run the heavenly race, looking unto Jesus. Heb. 12:2.

Is sleep becoming saints of God,
In the meridian day?
What! sleep when you should look abroad,
Arise, and watch and pray!

Thou risen Saviour, let us hear
Thy sweet, thy quick'ning voice:
Command us sleepy frames to fear,
And in thy love rejoice.

MAY 16.

Therefore, behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths. Hosea 2:6.

Here is a contest between the *free will* of the sinner, and the *free grace* of the Saviour. Why *therefore*? This alludes to what was spoken before. O how strong it savours of cursed, free-will pride! I will go after my lovers, etc. What says the Lord to this? Go, and destroy yourself, I will leave you to your own will? O ye patrons to the notion of free-will, a greater curse cannot befall you on this side hell than to be thus left. Though you have such pride, yet the Lord has more grace. Therefore he says, *Behold*. Take special notice of this. Your will is to leave me, and destroy your souls. But I will not suffer this. Grace reigns. Free will shall be conquered: my glory shall be exalted. *I will hedge up thy way with thorns*. Mind: it is *thy* way, not mine. I will set the briers of troubles, and the sharp thorns of afflictions, to goad and pierce thee: to stop and prevent thee. Say now, is there love in this, or not? O that in every affliction we may see the Lord's hand of grace, and his heart of love. Many souls would have been ruined by prosperity, if they had not been undone by adversity. They would have gone into the broad road of destruction, had not God hedged up the way by calamities. Better to have a sick stomach, than a guilty conscience. The Lord send me any plague, rather than the plague of a heart departing from him, saith St. Austin. If a hedge restrain not, a wall shall not be wanting. *I will make a wall, that she shall not find her paths*. O what straying hearts have Christ's sheep! O what love of heart has Christ towards us! What pains doth he take to keep

us near himself! "*Salvation* will God appoint for walls and bulwarks," (Isa. 26:1.) Jesus shews his lovely face. Then, says the soul, what, thou my Lord! thou best, thou dearest lover and friend, is it thou my first husband I would forsake for other lovers? O that there should be such a vile heart in me! Pardon, Lord, my folly. I find no path to turn to. "I will return to thee my first husband, for then it was better with me than now." Soul, ever entertain the most exalted sentiments of the grace of God; and the most self-abasing views of thy own nature. Heaven rings with acclamations of praise from backsliding souls. This is the glory of faith below, I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely. (Hos. 14:4.) If God has such love to us, let this quicken our love to him. For, we love him because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19.

Our Father's love, our Saviour's grace,
Ne'er changes to the souls they love:
But sin will make God hide his face,
And leave in darkness souls to rove.

Because such love and grace abound,
Shall we therefore abound in sin?
That soul who does, hath never found
The sweet constraints of love within.

MAY 17.

What shall we then say to these things? Rom. 8:31.

This is a most disagreeable chapter to free-will, pride, and self-righteous spirits. For it cuts the very sinews of boasting. It lays all sinners upon a level, while it proclaims salvation by sovereign grace. A great Arminian professor was lately honest enough to own, that St. Paul does contend for the doctrines of election and the final perseverance of the saints: but was weak enough to add, "I verily believe he does it in his own spirit." Such was his answer to these things. But when it pleases the enlightening Spirit, to display the glorious discoveries of the Divine mind, in his eternal purposes of grace and salvation, to lost and wretched sinners, the sin-convinced soul is struck with horror and amazement, and cries out, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!" All exceeds my comprehension. I bow to sovereign grace. I rejoice in everlasting love. I glory in the finished salvation of the Son of God. Just so, an officer in the navy whom I visited, when near death, when I laid before him the love of God to sinners, and the salvation of Christ for them, clapping his hand to his breast, in an ecstasy cried out, "Where have I lived, that I never heard these things before? Good God! have I got a soul?"

Come Christians, what have you to say to-night to God's loving us from eternity—choosing us in Christ, and blessing us with all spiritual blessings in him, before the foundation of the

world—redeeming us by Christ, in the fulness of time—calling us to Christ, in the day of his power—pardoning our sins, and justifying us by Christ in the time of love—enabling our hearts to choose Christ, and walk with him in holiness? What shall we say to these things? Say! with our Lord, in sweet submission to his sovereign will, even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight. We give thee the glory of all. We welcome these things as the glory of our souls. Glory to thee, O Spirit, for opening our blind eyes to see the glory of them, and humbling our proud hearts to submit to them. But what shall we say, to those who oppose these things? Satan will oppose. Resist him stedfastly in the faith of them. Your carnal reason will oppose. Beg Christ to bring it into captivity to him. Self-righteous men will oppose. Pity them. Treat them with love, consistent with zeal for the truth. Ever remember, who made you to differ?

Base pride and wicked unbelief
Reject thy truths, O Lord!
Hence conscience gets no sweet relief,
No comfort from thy word.

My God, instead of bold replies
Against thy sov'reign grace;
Teach me that here true wisdom lies,
To bow before thy face.

MAY 18.

And be found in him. Phil. 3:9.

What! the heavenly-inspired, holy, self-denied Paul, who had the richest experience of grace, manifold gifts of the Spirit, been caught up to the third heaven, and laboured more abundantly than all the apostles,—has he advanced no farther yet, than to have no other hope and desire than such a worthless sinner as I? What! had not he arrived at perfection? Had he no inherent righteousness, no graces of the Spirit, no holiness, no fruits of good works, no sincere obedience, no terms and conditions he had performed to look to, rely upon, and desire to be found in at the bar of God? No: but he had obtained precious faith in a precious Saviour. Therefore, he looks out of himself, out of all that was wrought in and done by him—he passes it all by—he looks through it all to Jesus—he renounces it all in point of justification before God, and puts the issue of his eternal life and salvation upon being found in Christ, and having on his infinitely perfect and everlastingly glorious righteousness. Beza, upon this place, brings in the justice of God pursuing Paul as a malefactor, and Christ as a city of refuge, which he desires to flee to, and be found in. Mr. Burkitt, though not the most consistent expositor, yet this is one of the many excellent things which he says: “Christ’s perfect obedience entitles us to heaven.” From St. Paul’s desire, we learn, (1st.) what is the sole object of a convinced sinner’s faith. Not, what he is in himself—not any thing wrought in him, or done by him: but, wholly, and exclusively of every other matter or thing, the person and righteousness of the Son of God. If you have the faith of

God's elect, you will rest your soul's hope only upon Christ, and desire to be found in him in life, in death, and at judgment. (2d.) Let us beware that we do not slight, despise, and decry the graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit in us. Though these are not to be looked at for our justification, yet they are comfortable evidences of our being one with Christ, and interested in the Father's everlasting love and the salvation of Christ. They are not bestowed on us to rival Christ in our hope; but that we should glory in him, and exalt him in our hearts, lips, and lives. (3d.) Though we desire to be found only in Christ, though our holy walk and good works cannot justify our persons; yet they justify our faith, our profession, yea, and the doctrines of grace, from the unjust charge of licentiousness. O! may we be more and more concerned to obey Christ, to let our light of truth shine before men, that, seeing our good works, they may glorify our Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16.) Lastly, St. Paul here wishes for the experienced comfort and sensible blessing of being found in Christ. This precious enjoyment we also should covet earnestly.

MAY 19.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Jude 20.

Instead of going on comfortably in this work, many are questioning, I do not know whether I have obtained a most holy faith or not. Bring this to a point to-night. Has the ruinous fabric of nature's self-confidence, self-righteousness, self-complacency, and self-pleasing ever been pulled down? Has the Spirit convinced you of sin? Do you see yourself a lost, ruined sinner: so lost and so ruined by sin, that no one but the Son of God can restore and save you? Do you believe that he came to save sinners? Is it the desire of your heart, to be saved from ALL sin by him? If so, you as surely possess a holy faith as you enjoy natural life. And you will get stronger evidence, and greater assurance of it, by using every blessed means to prove that you have this most holy faith, while you build up yourself on it. (1st.) This will appear to be a holy faith, by leading out your soul after a holy Saviour, that you may be rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of his perfect love to you, and finished salvation for you, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Col. 2:7.) You will not live a day, but praise will ascend from your heart to the Father, for his unspeakable gift of Christ; to the Son, for giving himself for you; and to the Spirit, for the gift of his most holy faith to you. (2d.) As you believe sin has made you miserable; that it causes God to hide his face; clouds your views of the Sun of Righteousness; grieves the Holy Spirit, and damps the joys of faith,—you cannot, you dare not seek happiness in the pleasures of sin. You will hate it, strive against, it, that you may grow in grace, and be built up in

your most holy faith. (3d.) As you believe that the earth, and all things that are therein, are doomed to be burnt up, you cannot love the world, so as to set your affections on it, and seek your happiness from it. You hear the voice of the Lord, "My son, give me your heart." When tempted by the honours, riches, and pleasures of a bewitching world, you will say of all, You bid too little to purchase me: I have a holy faith: I believe that my holy God can make me infinitely more honourable, rich, and happy, than all your toys and baubles. For, *the Lord is my portion*, saith my soul. I can say so, in the confidence of my most holy faith. O, Christian! bless the day, and bless the Lord, when this holy faith was given you. Be assured, a holy heaven is prepared for you, and that you shall enjoy it, so surely, as if you were now in possession of it, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul." 1 Pet. 1:9.

The Lord directs what means to use,
To build us up in holy faith:
Then let us daily seek and choose
To follow after what he saith.

Christ is the sure foundation laid—
Be careful that on him you build:
Your work shall prosper, and be made
Each joy and comfort for to yield.

MAY 20.

I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2.

If any person, destitute of the provisions of life, had a promise from some noble lord, I will amply provide for you—I will go this day to court, and get a place for you: if he believed his word, and depended on his power, it would fill the heart with joy. Suppose he actually succeeded to the most desirable place, and that it was in no one's power to dispatch him: what then? Why, this would add to his comfort. But, though no one could take his place from him, yet, alas! there is one, who will very soon summons him to another, in the place appointed for all living. Ah! this gives a damp to every earthly enjoyment. Off hands, from all: quit your hold of all: for you hold all earthly possessions by a very uncertain tenure. But, hear your Lord: rejoice at His words. (1st.) *I go*; willingly and cheerfully, through the most dreadful scenes of horror, agony, and death. *I go*, to face, fight with, and conquer all the powers of earth and hell for you. Such is my love to you, that, rather than you shall perish in hell for your sins, *I go*, to suffer all the torments of pain which you have deserved. Love to you, willingly carries me through all; makes me cheerful in all; and causes me to triumph over all, that I may enter into heaven *for you*. Dear Lord, let us have a feeling of this thy precious love in our hearts to-night. (2d.) *To prepare a place*. I will not reign alone in my Father's kingdom; to think no more of you, nor care no more of you. But as it is his good pleasure to give you the kingdom, I will enter and take possession of it as your forerunner. There I will plead my blood shed for you, my righteousness to justify

you, and my salvation to glorify you. (3d.) *For you.* Who? What is the character of those for whom Christ prepares this place? Had they never displeased their Lord? Did they never offend him? Alas! which of them shall we fix on as a perfect character? Peter denied him, with oaths and curses. All shamefully forsook him. Might they not then forfeit their place in glory? Yes, if love did not reign, and grace abound in the heart of Christ, over all the abounding of sin. O foolish thought of base unbelief, that Christ should prepare a place in heaven for those who might eternally perish in hell! But see them described, (verse 1.) They had troubled hearts about Christ, and believed in him. Judge yourself to-night. Do you believe in Christ? Is your heart troubled, lest you should lose him? Do you long for the eternal enjoyment of him? Rejoice: he has prepared a place for you. "Where he is, there shall you be also." John 14:3.

O Thou, who dost prepare a place,
A mansion in the sky,
For sinners, thy redeemed race!
Lord, to my soul draw nigh.

Prepare my soul, and make me meet
To see thy face above,
That I in heav'n may take my seat,
And praise thee for thy love.

MAY 21.

I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:3.

Our Lord spake these words to his disciples, who had faith in him, and yet had troubled hearts. Is this your case? They are suited to all such. They are to strengthen the faith and comfort the hearts of disciples. O this coming again of Christ will be the crowning work of all! To whom? awful to think of! The greatest part of the world believe nothing of Christ's first coming, and care nothing about his second coming. It will be a dreadful coming to them. "I will come again." A second coming implies a first. If Christ has come in the power of his Spirit to our hearts, so that we have seen his glory, and believed on him, we shall look with pleasure, and long with joy, for his coming again. This is a sure mark, that we shall "receive a crown of righteousness, if we love the appearing of Christ." (2 Tim. 4:8.) Now, to your hearts by faith: hereafter, by sight. "I will receive you unto myself." Glory to thee, my dear Lord: O! make my heart to love and thank thee more and more, that, vile, filthy, polluted, and abominable as I am, thou hast received me, washed me in thy blood, justified me in thy righteousness, caused me to see thee, and hast given me the privilege of becoming a son of God. O what a day of joy and glory will that be, when our dear Lord shall receive us unto himself! That is a sweet word, full of precious mystery, "That Christ might present it to *himself*, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." "For he hath sanctified and cleansed us in his own blood." (Eph. 5:27.) O what love has Christ to us! what pains does he take with us!

with what joy will he receive us! Never, never did the most affectionate bridegroom receive his bride, or the most tender parent his beloved child from the jaws of death, with such joy as Christ will receive and welcome us. "That, where am, there ye may be also." O my soul! what words are these? Enough to make my drooping spirit exult with joy, under all its burdens, sorrows, and difficulties. Is a sense of Christ's absence, thy present pain? Is the sense of his presence now, thy greatest joy? Then soon, very soon, thou shalt be for ever with thy Lord. For, so sure as Jesus spake these words on earth, ALL his believing members shall be with him in glory. O then, welcome pains, sickness, temptations, losses, crosses, afflictions of every kind, yea, death itself, whenever, and by whatever way it comes! for ye are all, but as so many love-tokens from my Lord, crying,

Arise, my fair one, come away—
No mortal joys are worth thy stay.

MAY 22.

I die daily. 1 Cor. 15:31.

St. Paul in a peculiar sense could say so. He was daily in danger of suffering martyrdom for Christ. He puts the most solemn oath to it. "I protest, by our (not your) rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." It is like swearing by the Holy Ghost, the author of this joy. Happy Paul! the joy of the Lord was in his heart; the prospect of enjoying the Lord, in his eye; the world under his feet; and he, daily expecting his Lord's messenger to call him home. This was living indeed in the very suburbs of glory. And pray what should hinder you and I from living as he did? St. Paul was the subject of the same corrupt nature, in which dwelt no good thing, as we are. We have the same Lord to look to and rejoice in, the same faith and hope to animate us, the same Holy Ghost to strengthen and comfort us, and the same place prepared by Christ for us, as he had. Why should not we also die daily? Why should not we live a dying life? All do in reality. But why should not we in sweet practice and happy experience? Plainly, we do not believe enough, what our Lord hath done for us, is to us, and has promised to bestow on us: therefore, do not look and pray enough to our Lord. My dear fellow Christians, I will be bold to enter this protest, from the experience of my own soul, that *we cannot live comfortably, unless we die daily*: as considering ourselves daily subject to the stroke of death. This hour, this moment, may put a period to my existence. Why then, all my busy cares, anxious thoughts, corroding fears, and ardent desires, after the objects of time and sense? Death will soon make me quit my

hold of them. But I will be beforehand with him. I will die in heart, hope, and affection to them. Take, ye sons of earth, the riches, honours, and pleasures, of a perishing world. Grasp them in your hand: clasp them to your heart, if you can: but lo, instead of substance, you will find shadow. All are but airy bubbles, that will elude your hope. I have tried them all. I die to them all. For I have found that above which kills my desires, hopes, and affections of all below. I find a once crucified, now risen and ascended Saviour, has got possession of my heart. He dwells there by faith. Christ is in me the hope of glory. The glorious rays of my Sun of righteousness extinguish all the faint light of earthly glow-worms. My Lord lives in me: that is a death to all without me. Death I daily familiarize: I entertain him as my friend, converse freely and daily with him, lodge him in my breast; he has my daily thoughts. Why? because my Lord introduces him to my heart, not with a sting to wound and kill me; but with the voice of a messenger of peace, to call me from pains and trials, to peace and rest in the full enjoyment of Jesus above, who is my chief glory and my life below. Col. 3:4.

“He that form’d me from the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb:
All my time shall ever be
Ordered by his wise decree.”

MAY 23.

Honour the Lord with thy substance. Prov. 3:9.

O may this be the daily study of our hearts, and the constant practice of our lives! "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord: for the marriage of the Lamb is come." (Rev. 19:7.) He is our husband: we are espoused to him by faith. Consider the work of honouring the Lord, and the reasons for it. (1st.) The work. What! can I, a worm of the earth, honour the Lord of heaven: Yes; thou art called to it, and formed for it. This honour have all his saints. It is our greatest honour on earth to honour our Lord in heaven. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord! and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power: to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." (Psa. 145:10, 11, 12.) So they honoured the Lord of old, in displaying the glory of his grace. This work you are called to, if you have seen the glory of his kingdom, felt the power of it, and entered into it by faith. "Honour the Lord with thy substance." Do not put such a dry, shriveled comment upon the word *substance*, as though it meant giving a trifle now and then to the poor. Remember, the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand, or be established. (Isa. 32:8.) Do not dispense shadow, when the Lord requires substance. If thy soul is liberal, thou wilt devise liberal things. This text will not only remind you, of liberally dispensing of your substance to the poor and needy: but also of honouring your Lord, by the faith of your heart, the love of your soul, placing your whole affections upon him, and devoting your substance,

your whole spirit, soul, and body, unto him. You will not be content with notions without life; form, without spirit; worship, without the heart; religion, without the soul. For, (2d.) Consider the reason of this. (1st.) God has put the highest honour upon you. "He has called you into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:9.) "He has blessed you with *all* spiritual blessings in him." (Eph. 1:3.) There is not one blessing God has to bestow, or Christ is possessed of; but is treasured up for you in Christ, and shall be received out of the fulness of Christ. Can you walk in the fellowship of Christ, and not delight to honour God with your substance? (2d.) You received all this freely; therefore, you ought to give freely. You are a pensioner upon God; and God is, as it were, a petitioner to you. Can you refuse him who speaks? Can you withhold any thing from him, by whom you enjoy your ALL? (3d.) You have but a little to honour your Lord. Let the faith of this stir you up to exert all your might. Only call in, and consult faith and love, and act under their influence to God's love.

O grant me, Lord, this one request,
And I'll be satisfy'd;—
That love divine may rule my heart,
And all my actions guide.

MAY 24.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. John 6:66.

Thus was fulfilled that word, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3.) This chapter is like a touch-stone. Herein our Lord tries his disciples, to see who are real sterling, and who not. Many are his professed, but few his real disciples. Sifting times will come. They make manifest. The hottest place in hell is prepared for those who turn their backs upon the Son of God on earth. Lord, grant that our faces may be set like a flint towards thee. For, blessed be thy name, thou hast said of those who continue with thee in thy temptations: "I appoint unto you a kingdom: ye shall eat and drink at my table." (Luke 22:29, 30.) But those who are not agreed with Christ, have not the mind of Christ: will not walk long with him. See this exemplified. (1st.) "Some of these disciples followed Christ for the loaves and fishes," ver. 26. Those who follow Christ, to get food for their bodies, and the good things of this life, instead of food for the soul, will soon forsake him. Christ's blessings are spiritual; their views are carnal. Such are not agreed with him. (2d.) Others murmured at, him, because he said, "I came down from heaven," ver. 41. They were ignorant of his mission from the Father. Many people hear again and again of Christ, but have no solid, scriptural judgment of the divinity of his person, and humanity of his nature, nor the end and design of his coming into the world. For want of knowledge of him, and faith in him, they soon forsake him. (3d.) Others could not receive his saying, "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the

blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you," ver. 53. His words were spiritual, their notions carnal. They could not see how Christ could be the spiritual food of souls by faith. So many in our day exclaim, where mysteries begin, religion ends. These left following Christ. (4th.) His doctrine of his Father's sovereign grace was a severe stroke, to the free-will pride of their self-righteous, self-sufficient hearts. "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father," ver. 65. "From that (that speech, time is not in the original) many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." O how many professed disciples in our day are uttering horrid speeches against the electing love, and efficacious grace of God the Father, in drawing sinners to his Son for salvation! Poor souls, they have not the mind of Christ: they see not the special mercy of being under the efficacious influence of the Spirit of the Father. O disciple, let the falling away of others warn thee. Be strong in the Lord. Be diffident in self. Look constantly to him, who is able to keep you from falling. Jude 24.

"Lord, hast thou made me know thy ways?
Conduct me in thy fear;
And grant me such supplies of grace,
That I may persevere."

MAY 25.

I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 1 Cor. 15:10.

When we meet with journals, diaries, experiences, etc. which do not exalt the riches of the grace of God, but set off the self-importance of the writers of them, they are as nauseous to the mind as tainted food to the palate. They remind us of the poet's observation, "And I the little hero of each tale." Not so St. Paul, in speaking of himself. No sooner had he brought this little *great I* upon the stage, but he instantly caused it to disappear. Hence, the doctrine is plain, The grace of God makes a person labour for God, and yet keeps him humble before God. Consider, (1st.) To have the grace of God with one, is to have a lively sense of God's free favour, in Christ, upon one's own soul. Without this, we go on heavily in the ways of God; soon tire in his service; and turn back and walk no more with Christ. This was the life and spring of all Paul's labours. See to it then, that we wrestle with God in prayer; study the precious word of his grace; and be diligent in attending his ordinances, that we may ever have a lively sense of God's pardoning, justifying, sanctifying grace in Christ upon our hearts—ever cautiously avoid all persons, places, and things, which tend to grieve the Spirit and damp his lively influence. For, (2d.) Every private Christian is called to labour for God, as well as apostles and ministers. There is such a thing, as receiving the grace of God in vain. How? When we profess to esteem and receive the doctrine of the gospel of grace, and yet they bring not forth in us correspondent fruits. O, how much is this the case among

professors! how greatly to be deplored and deprecated! What! do you profess to know God, and yet in works deny him? Do you believe the love and salvation of Christ for miserable sinners? and yet can you, instead of labouring for his glory, be idle, in not living and walking, studying and striving to please our Saviour, and profit his dear children? Have you the grace of God with you? It is to be feared. If you have, you have sadly lost its life and influence. O, be deeply affected for your state. (3d.) Is the grace of God warm upon our hearts? Are we alive and active for God's glory in our lives? Do we labour more than others for God? O! let us beware we do not sacrifice to ourselves; exalt our own power and faithfulness: for true grace will keep us low and humble. In the light of it, we shall see how little we do for God; how much more we ought to do; and, in the little we do, how much evil there is in it, and how far short we come in all of his glory. "Be clothed with humility." 1 Pet. 5:5.

He is most blest, who labours most
In God's most holy ways:
But, after all, we dare not boast,
For all is done through grace.

MAY 26.

JESUS said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. John 6:53.

Ignorant persons, who sit under unenlightened teachers, are taught to apply these words to the sacrament. Hence they think, if they do but receive the sacrament, they surely eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ; their sins are pardoned; all is well; and they shall go to heaven at last. O, how horridly is that sacred ordinance prostituted! "The wicked, such as be void of lively faith, do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing," says St. Austin. What doth our Lord here mean? (1st.) That naturally we have no spiritual life in us. We are dead, under the sentence of the law: as dead to all knowledge of, love to, and delight in God, as a beast. We have no more likeness to God, and the life of God in us, than a devil has. O! this is very cutting and humbling to our proud nature: flesh and blood rise with indignation against it. But, (2d.) what joyful news is here for us? Christ came, that we, sinners of the human race, (not fallen angels) might have life, a spiritual, holy, heavenly life: yea, and have it more abundantly too. (John 10:10.), O may the Spirit enlighten us to see this, and quicken us to go to Christ, that we may enjoy it: for, (3d.) This is by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Our Lord puts his strong oath to it, that in this way, and in no other, we can have it; and this fully confirms that, in this way,

we are sure to enjoy it. (4th.) What is meant by eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood? Our Lord deals most familiarly with us. He sends us to our tables, to form proper ideas of what he is to us. Just what eating and drinking natural food is to the body, that Christ is to the soul: as that cannot live without eating and drinking, no more can our souls without the flesh and blood—the life and death of Christ, received into our hearts by faith. Thus, we enjoy the life of God in our souls. But, (5th.) here is a precious word. "The Son of man." Faith must fasten upon that. It is feeding upon the humanity of Christ; that brings us to enjoy the divine life. We come to God, through the flesh of Christ. We feed on the flesh and blood of the *Son of man*, and so become one flesh with him: "We are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." (Eph. 5:30.) We are incorporated into him; and, O joyful! are presented to the Father, without spot or wrinkle, IN HIM. Eph. 5:27.

When at thy table Lord, we meet,
To feed on food divine,
Thy body is the bread we eat,
Thy precious blood the wine.

MAY 27.

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matt. 12:37.

Who then can be saved? Is not this legal doctrine? Does it not contradict that fundamental doctrine of the gospel, justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ *only*? No: no more than St. James, in maintaining justification by works, contradicts St. Paul, who insists upon justification by faith. They are easy to be reconciled: so are these words to justification by grace. Surely our Lord never meant to contradict his own words: "He who believeth hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life." (John 5:24.) He cannot mean to overthrow our faith, distress our souls, and cause us to rest our final justification, at the last day, upon either our words or our works. If so, woe unto the most *perfect*! It had been better for that man, he had never been born: for eternal condemnation must be his doom. But justification by faith in Christ, is ever to be held fast in the conscience, as the everlasting truth of an unchangeable God; the foundation of hope; the source of peace; an unexhaustible fountain of joy, and the spring of holiness. But what means our Lord? O! may he give us to understand. In the preceding verse, he says, "For every *idle* word men shall speak, they shall give account thereof." The most learned translate it, malicious or wicked word. Now our Lord, just before, treats of "speaking a word against the Son of man." (verse 32.) Therefore, for these malicious words, resulting from their unbelief and rejection of Christ, men shall be condemned. The words of the lips

proclaim the disposition of the heart. As words condemn Christ, so, for such words, they shall be condemned by Christ. So by thy words, approving of, and confessing Christ's blood, to be the one atonement for sin, and his obedience the *one* righteousness, to justify sinners, thou shalt be justified. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10.) Thus, the fate of every soul, at the last day, will be determined by his faith in Christ, or his unbelief of him, declared by his words. They will be called in as evidence of faith, unto eternal life; or of unbelief, unto eternal death. They will justify our faith or condemn our unbelief. By our words, we understand the general tenour of our conversation. St. Paul speaks of a conversation becoming the gospel. (Phil. 1:27.) St. Peter, of a good conversation in Christ. (1 Pet. 3:16.) Without this, O disciple! what evidence have you, that you have the faith of God's elect *now*, or shall be finally justified at the last day? "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12:14.

MAY 28.

From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised. Psa. 113:3.

Praise is the incessant employ of glorified saints in heaven. There they fully see and eternally sing of the electing, redeeming, sanctifying, glorifying love of the blessed Trinity. May our souls catch some of the heavenly flame of love, and imitate them in our praise to-night. This is the work of a humble heart. Pride is the parent of murmuring and discontent. A sense of the blessings of the Lord, and a sight of our unworthiness of them, excite praises in the heart. This is the language of a praising soul, Why me, Lord? Why am I singled out from the ruins of a fallen race, to partake of thy special grace, peculiar love, and precious salvation? Am I better than others? Have I done more to deserve thy mercies than others? Have I a greater right to challenge thy favour than others? O, Lord! why me? Thus, while the soul sinks in humility, it rises in praise. David describes saints, with the "highest praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand." (Psa. 149:6.) What for? to execute vengeance upon their heathen notions, of sacrificing any praise to themselves, or ascribing any thing to their own deserts. These are special marks of a regenerate person. (1st.) His heart is formed for, and his soul delights to praise the Lord at all times. For he sees himself infinitely and entirely indebted to the grace of God, for all he is, all he enjoys, and all he hopes for. (2d.) It is his grief, that he cannot praise the Lord as he would, without intermission, "From the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same." For worthy is the

Lord of unceasing praise. His mercies are renewed every morning, continued unto evening, and repeated in the night season. But here is a precious word in this Psalm, that endears the Lord to us, and excites praise from us. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwellest on high! who *humbleth* himself"—pause, O my soul! at that astonishing word. How did the most high God humble himself? to the most low and abject state. Made himself of no reputation; took on him the form of a servant; a mean man: yea, more, became obedient to the most ignominious death, even the cursed death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8.) O, my soul, though vile in thine own eyes, though of no repute in the world, consider this. Thou canst never want an inexhaustible fund of comfort, and a never-failing source for praise. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." Psa. 103:1.

Each risen sun that I behold,
Calls for my daily praise:
Thy mercies, Lord, can ne'er be told,
How rich! how free thy grace!

The shades of each revolving night
Proclaim thy grace to me:
O, joyful hope! O prospect bright!
In heav'n I shall praise thee.

MAY 29.

Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.
Isa. 55:1.

A free gospel is the glory of God's grace, the joy of humble souls, the envy of malicious devils, and the contempt of proud, self-righteous pharisees. *Milk* is the pure, sweet, soul-nourishing doctrine of Christ. *Wine* is the generous, heart-reviving comforts of pardon of sins, and peace with God through the blood of Christ. The Lord knows we cannot grow strong, nor be comfortable in our souls, without this precious milk and animating wine. Here is the Lord's open house, public market, free invitation, and fixed price. *Come*: draw nigh to me: keep not at a distance from me, saith the Lord. Make no excuse, nor any delay: come now, this moment. Here is a free invitation, and a hearty welcome. O the love of our Lord's heart! *Buy*. Art thou rich? such the Lord sends empty away. Hast thou brought a stock of thine own faithfulness, terms thou hast fulfilled, and conditions performed to buy with? then, instead of wine and milk, thou wilt receive a scourge from the Lord. Remember, those who bought, he whipt out of his temple. O! saith the poor, self-emptied, soul-humbled sinner, this word *buy*, puts me to a stand. I am poor and penniless; I have nothing to bring but misery and poverty; I am perishing for want of comfort. Thou art the very person invited. The Lord filleth the hungry with good things. O precious word of marvellous grace! Buy—*without money and without price*, or money's worth. What! have I been five, ten, twenty years, or upwards, in Christ, and have I got no inherent stock of grace, no more worth, or

value to buy with, than I had when I first came to him as a poor, naked, and miserable sinner? Must I come, as at first, poor and penniless? Yes: or not at all. The Lord knows what thou art. He invites thee just as thou art. This price just suits thy abject poverty. What an affront would it be to a dear friend, to bring a price in our hands for a rich entertainment, with a free invitation. No affectionate mother more freely administers the breast of nourishment to her hunting infant, than the Lord his milk and wine to thirsty souls. Faith works by the love of this: it operates upon the heart, so as to produce sincere love to God, and cheerful obedience to his word and will. But base unbelief; with a bastard humility, raises jealousies and suspicions of the Lord's rich love and free grace. One says, It cannot be for me—I am too vile; another, I am unworthy of it: Christ says, "Whosoever will, let him come." Rev. 22:17.

I thank thee, Lord, who fix'd thy price
Exactly suited to my case:
Tho' poor and vile in my own eyes,
I'm freely welcome to thy grace.

No works, no worthiness have I,
To bring before my Lord to plead;
But still thou sayest, come and buy:
Thy grace, my Lord, is free indeed.

MAY 30.

—*And confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Heb. 11:13.

O, ye worldly-minded professors, can ye read this without being ashamed and reprov'd? What will bring a man to this confession? Will sickness, and a near approach to death? O! no. Men return from the most dangerous illness, to greater love of the world, and more ardent pursuit after the things of it. Look at a dying worldling. See him, like a drowning man, clinching the faster what he has grasped for his hope and help. Men not only live fools, but die fools too. Their senses beguile them: their reason befools them: they reject the plainest truths before them. Nothing will kill the love of a bewitching world in a deceitful heart, but the view of heaven by faith. No man will confess himself a stranger to the world, and a pilgrim on the earth, until he sees himself "a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19.) As we say, we will not quit a certainty for an uncertainty. Admire these ancient heroes of faith. View and imitate their conduct. What caused this confession? (1st.) They had not received the promises. The Messiah was not then come from heaven, with all the inestimable blessings of his kingdom. Yet they believed in him, looked to him and lived by faith upon him, as promised to come. For, (2d.) though they saw the precious promises afar off, yet they were realized to their hearts by faith: the distance of them did not weaken their confidence in the existence of them. Faith brought them nigh to their minds. For, (3d.) they were persuaded of them, and embraced them. They esteemed the

promises of God as the chief delight, and greatest joy of their souls. Carnal men cry, O, faith is to do all for you. No, not so: Christ has done all for us. By faith we enjoy all the comforts of it. Hence we commence followers of Christ: "Strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and travellers to our Father's kingdom. Have you had no respect paid by carnal men? Do they see nothing about you to laugh at, and deride you for? No: then you have great reason to question, whether you are a real follower of a despised, crucified Lord. The world will love its own. Are you striving to keep God and the world? Of all men upon earth, you are most to be pitied; for you will be most miserable. Most joyful to say, "I am a stranger and sojourner, as all my fathers were." Psalm 39:12.

My heart, my hope, my portion is
In Christ, my Lord, above:
I wander here, and find no bliss,
That's worthy of my love.

Men think me strange that I can't join
With them to take my part,
In carnal joys, in mirth and wine,
But, Lord, thou hast my heart.

MAY 31.

God be merciful to me, a sinner. Luke 18:13.

I often reflect on what a perfectionist once said to me, upwards of twenty years ago: "Do not go to hear such preaching; you will get such a notion of sinnership, as though you were to be a poor sinner all your days." Truly, after being so long in Christ, when I look into the glass of God's law, I see myself just the same poor sinner I was at first; striving against sin, and looking to Christ for salvation. I thank my Lord, I do not trust in myself that I am righteous: yet am as righteous in myself, as any poor sinner on earth is; and as righteous in Christ, as any saint in glory is. O the humbling joy of faith! it brings boldness of access to God into the heart, while it destroys self-righteous confidence. Many poor souls are apt to say, I am afraid to approach God, I am such a sinner—I tremble to think what will become of me—I fear God will cast me off for ever; and damn me eternally, for my sins. No, saith the Lord: "My thoughts are not as your thoughts. Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:7, 8.) But what plea have I to make? as good an one as the best saint upon earth has. He is not a saint in Christ, who dares make any other. He it is: your Lord puts it into your mouth; and assures you, that it is most prevailing before the throne of God—*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* But, am I to bring no works, no faith? No: your faith brings you. Faith leaves all works behind. It relies on God's gracious promises: it pleads God's rich mercy in Christ, to poor, perishing sinners. Thus seek mercy; thus beseech God to be propitious to you. But

must I not bring repentance? You cannot come without, if you have faith. Repentance flows from faith; is a change of mind, concerning the object of hope for salvation; and a change of conduct towards that object. A cry for mercy to God in Christ, as a miserable sinner, is the language of true repentance. But am I to live in sin, and walk in sin; and yet cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner? You cannot, if this cry comes from your heart, affected with the evil of sin; no more than you can cry to be delivered from devouring flames, and yet contentedly continue in the midst of them. But when we cast in our minds for a plea, we have the most blessed one,—the full atonement and perfect righteousness of JESUS. Therefore, there is never any room for despair. "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace in every time of need." Heb. 4:16.

I daily live by mercy free,
To me, a sinner, shew'd:
I've nought to claim from God to me—
He gives, because he's good.

Then let me take the lowest place
Of deep humility;
And if I ever see Christ's face,
There's nothing due to me.

JUNE 1.

But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Eph. 2:13.

If any one were asked, do you live near the court? Have you free access to his majesty? Did you ever kiss the king's hand? Who would hesitate one moment for an answer? Consciousness would instantly dictate one. Pray, is Christian experience so dark and doubtful a matter, that if asked, are you brought nigh to God? Do you live near God? Have you free access to God? That we cannot answer, with some degree of knowledge and certainty. O my dear fellow Christians, though we are brought nigh to God, yet we do not live near him. Hence our doubt and uncertainty. Our hearts and affections too much rove in the high roads of earthly honour, riches, and pleasures. Here clouds of dust rise. They so dim our sight, and cloud our views, that we can hardly see our way, or tell where we are. Here we are reminded, (1st.) That we "were sometimes afar off." Awful distance! As far as possible from God, because so far from original righteousness. As far off from God, as a devil. Naturally, no more desire to draw nigh to him. Nay, Satan had possession of us, ruled in, and reigned over us. We loved our master, hated our God, and delighted at our distance from him. O be covered with shame. Be clothed with humility. Yet lift up your head with joy. For, (2d.) We are brought nigh to God. O, says one, I wish I was sure of this. It is true in the word, that sinners are brought nigh to God. You can only know this for yourself by experience. Therefore consider, (3d.) How we are brought nigh. By the blood of Christ. By faith in him, we are

reconciled to God, justified before God, and at peace with God. If you are brought nigh to God, (1st.) Christ is precious to you. Your heart is towards him. Your hope is fixed on him. (2d.) His blood is highly prized by you. You look to his atonement for the pardon of your sins, to cleanse your conscience from guilt, and to bring peace to your soul. (3d.) By him you delight to draw nigh to God, making his blood and righteousness your only plea for salvation. And, (4th.) You will live near to God in love, and walk before him in holiness. You will hate the things you once loved, and love the things you once hated. In this way only, you can enjoy fellowship and peace with God, comfort from God, and assurance that you are a child of God. Says Christ, "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and the Comforter shall abide with you for ever. John 14:15.

Brought nigh to God by Jesus' blood:
Poor sinners, here's good news!
O bless your dear redeeming God,
And on him ever muse.

Live near to Christ, and daily prove
Your fellowship divine;
Abide in his most precious love,
Till you in glory shine.

JUNE 2.

I will call upon GOD, and the LORD shall save me. Psalm 55:16.

I have often been struck with the conduct of blind Bartimeus. When "Many charged him to hold his peace, he cried the more a great deal, thou son of David have mercy upon me." (Mark 10:48.) Why was this? Truly he had a feeling sense of his loss of sight, and by faith he saw Jesus able to restore it. See the consequence of this importunate cry. Did the sun stand still at the word of Joshua? Behold, at the cry of Bartimeus, the Lord and Creator of all the host of heaven, *stood still*. Jesus knows the cry of his own Spirit. He will hear it, and help the soul who utters it. "His ears are open to our prayers." (1 Pet. 3:12.) Look, (1st.) At David's circumstances. Was he now on the mount of joy, basking in the sunbeams of comfort? No, he is sighing out a doleful complaint, in the vale of distress. Says he, "I mourn because of the voice of the enemy, and the oppressions of the wicked. My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling art come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." (Verse 3, etc.) (2d.) What is his resolution? Does he give up his hope in God? Does he flee his presence, and seek for comfort in the world: from its vain pleasures, sensual delights, and from the men of it? No, but says he, "I will call upon God." Here is a lesson of instruction for us. The more fears, terrors, pains, and oppressions beset us, the more should they excite calls upon God from us. Seek to no object, to be eased from them, but God. Remember, not one of them, but is by his appointment or permission.

They are calls from God, to call upon him. When they bring us to God, his loving will is answered. He will not suffer his dear people, to live at a distance from him, without calling upon him. He loves their souls. He delights in their prayers. And the "Lord's comforts delight their souls." (Psalm 94:19.) Can you say so? Then (3d.) You may confidently take up David's conclusion, "The Lord shall save me." Is not this too bold? Yes, if founded upon any thing in yourself, as the cause, *why* God should save you, it is daring presumption. But, from the Lord's absolute declarations, full and free promises given us in Christ, we are divinely warranted thus to conclude. O then take and prize the Lord's word, as your blessed Charter of salvation. Plead it before him. Expect all salvation from him: even victory over all sin, deliverance from every trouble, the comfort of holiness here, and the joys of glory in eternity. "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:23.

How bold is faith to challenge thus,
A claim upon the Lord:
O 'tis because the Lord claims us
His portion, in his word.

JUNE 3.

To them who have obtained like precious faith with us through [in] the righteousness of GOD, and [even] our Saviour JESUS CHRIST. 2 Pet. 1:1.

There may be strong faith, where there is no true faith. Persons may pretend to have the assurance of faith—may believe that their sins are forgiven, without one grain of precious faith. Who believes more than a Deist does? He believes he has wisdom to guide, and power to save himself, without either the word, or the grace of God. Who has stronger faith than the self-righteous Pharisee had? He believed he had a right to go to God—to plead his works before God—and to assure his heart that he was accepted of God. He wanted no righteousness from God. This is just such a faith, which all unregenerate men have. It is not a *precious* faith—it is not obtained through the precious righteousness of Christ—it doth not make his glorious person, and everlasting righteousness precious to the heart—it does not cause such, to renounce the filthy rags of their own righteousness, and to delight in God, as justifying the ungodly, through the righteousness of Christ; and sanctifying the unholy, through the Spirit of his grace. That faith is ever to be suspected, as only a rank weed, which grows in the corrupt soil of human nature, if the possessors of it see not the evils of sin which is in them, the curse it has brought upon them, and that nothing can relieve their conscience, support their mind, bring hope to their heart, and joy to their spirits, but the one spotless righteousness of Christ, in which sinners stand perfectly justified before God. He, who dares open his mouth, in

objections against God's imputing the righteousness of his Son, freely to sinners, and fully justifying them thereby, is shrewdly to be suspected, that so far from having obtained "like precious faith" with the apostles, his heart is not yet convinced of sin. Precious faith will shew itself by its fruits, inward as well as outward. The heart will bow to God's sovereign will, receive his doctrines of grace, in the love of them, and not object and cavil against them. It will glory, that salvation from first to last, is not of works but of grace. And it will experience, that the grace of God which bringeth salvation, most sweetly, and powerfully, teaches to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. Most sweetly says one, "Surely, there can be no greater honor to Christ than this, in the sense of sin, wants, stains, and blemishes, to wrap ourselves in the righteousness of Christ, and with boldness to go clothed in the garments of this our elder Brother, to the throne of grace." This is the glory of faith, Lord grant it may be ours!

JUNE 4.

LORD, be merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. Psalm 41:4.

Is this the language of the man after God's own heart? Was David a saint when he uttered it? Yes, he was a holy man of God. This confession and prayer shew it. His heart was not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, nor blinded by self-righteous pride, so as to say, "I have no sin." Self-righteous hearts cannot away with this, that all the Lord's saints are yet in themselves miserable sinners; that they daily see need to confess this; and to sue for mercy and healing from the Lord. Here is a confession, a plea, and a prayer. (1st.) A confession, "I have sinned against thee." Thus we must come and confess to the Lord to-day, to-morrow, and every day, till the sun of life sets. Sense of sin, whether fresh contracted, or long since committed, abides with us. It wounds and pains a gracious soul. Here grace discovers itself. That soul waits not for time to efface the memory of sin, or strives to stifle convictions for it, but goes humbly to the Lord, and confesses it, with all its aggravations, and with this above all others, "*Lord, against thee, I have sinned.*" O may my soul never, never lose this conviction, that every sin is against thee, my Lord and loving Father—*thee*, my Lord and gracious Redeemer—*thee*, my Lord and gracious Comforter. This makes sin exceeding sinful, while it magnifies the superabounding riches of grace, in receiving sinners, and pardoning sin. (2d.) Consider the plea. It is not the Pharisee's parade, Lord, I have done this and that, or I have not done so and so. Lord, I have been faithful to thy grace: I am not so bad as others. No! but it is the

Publican's plea, "Lord, be merciful:" to me a vile sinner, who have done nothing to deserve thy favour, yet plead thy mercy promised to sinners, in Christ Jesus. Thou canst be just, and yet justify the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Therefore (3d.) I pray, "heal my soul." No prayers, no tears, no duties, no terms and conditions, of mine, can heal my soul. No, my best works are stained with pollution: my holiest duties are mixed with sin. Nothing but the blood of *the Lamb* can bring pardon to my heart, peace to my conscience, and healing to my soul. "The Lord will speak unto his people and to his saints." (Psalm 85:8.) For, O precious words! he assures us, "*All manner* of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Matt. 12:31.

Tho' sin doth so distress my soul,
With sickness and with pain:
My God will heal and make me whole,
And give me peace again.

No plea have I, thou Lamb of God,
For mercy, but thro' thee:
Cleansing and healing by thy blood,
To sinners come most free.

JUNE 5.

Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Psalm 97:11.

He, who never doubts his sincerity to God, has great reason to suspect his knowledge of himself. An hypocrite cannot be a Christian. Yet there is hypocrisy in the fallen nature of every Christian. Such are ever suspecting themselves. At times, they fear, lest they should turn out nothing but hypocrites at last. This is a proof, that their hearts are upright with Christ; their fears and suspicions are a blessed means, of keeping them from falling away from him. Righteous souls pass through many dark frames and disagreeable experiences. Sometimes, they are put to a stand, ready to question if all be right within or not. For, they are the subjects of a nature, in which dwells every evil, which wars against God, the peace, holiness, and comfort of their souls. Hence they are sometimes in seasons of darkness. They see not things in the light of truth: they enjoy not the comfort of this truth, that they are "righteous in the righteousness of Christ," (2 Cor. 5:21.) and made upright by his grace. Upright souls mourn in darkness, and desire ever to walk in the light. Yes, says St. Peter, ye "greatly rejoice in the salvation of Jesus, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations." If need be! O what need can there be? He tells us. That the trial of your precious faith might be found, unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:6, 7.) Tried faith is true faith. Touch any metal but gold, and aqua fortis will burn it off. True faith stands the fire of temptations—trusts Christ in heaviness—stays upon him in

darkness. For at all times, in all seasons, under all circumstances, light and gladness are sown for you, and in due season shall spring up in you. Where are they sown? Where every covenant blessing is reaped. In Jesus, the surety of the covenant. (Heb. 7:22.) All natural light is in, and flows from the sun. All spiritual light flows from Christ, the sun of righteousness, who saith, "I am the light of the world: he who followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12.) Is light sown in Christ for us? Let us with David claim in faith, The Lord is *my* light, and my salvation. (Psalm 27:1.) Does gladness of heart spring from Christ? Then say, "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." (Psalm 104:34.) Thus faith is tried and proved in the darkest hour: thus it manifests itself to be the faith of God's elect; for it cleaves to God's elect, (Jesus) in whom God's soul delighteth. Isa. 42:1.

Both light and gladness in God's word,
For righteous souls are sown,
And shall spring up within those hearts,
Who have the Saviour known.

JUNE 6.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 14:12.

This is a melancholy truth, "All flesh has corrupted his way upon the earth." (Gen. 6:12.) From sad experience of this, Jeremiah confesses, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man who walketh to direct his steps." (10:23.) ALL we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, says Isaiah (53:6.) O it is a most blessed thing to be convinced of this and humbly pray with David, "See if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:24.) We can never enough call to mind, love and praise our good shepherd, who came to seek, and save us, from our own way, which seemeth right in our eyes. What way is this? A most dangerous one. It is the way of wickedness, in which we have strong confidence of our own righteousness. Every man is naturally in this way. The most openly profane, as well as the decent Pharisee, possesses some hope in himself, that he has done, or can do something to save himself, and that his way is right, and shall end well at the last. The worst of men must think at times, if destitute of all hope, black despair must ensue. A false hope, built upon self-righteousness, keeps up their spirits. How long? Till they go down to hell with a lie in their right hand: Or till the Spirit of God convinces them of *sin*: shews them their condemnation for sin: and that they are destitute of righteousness—that nothing short of an absolute perfect one, can justify them before God—and that this is only to be found in the Son of God. Now every way leads to some

end. The way that seems right in a man's own eyes, will end in death: in the death of hope, and destruction of the soul. The man, who is in this way, that seemeth right unto him, is ever exalting his own righteousness, and decrying the imputed righteousness of Christ. Stop, O soul, and consider, what way art thou in? That which seems right in thy own sight, or, that which God declares is right in his? Remember, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he who hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." (Prov. 12:15.) Jesus is our *counsellor*. Harken to him. He says, "I am *the way*." (John 14:6.) The only way, exclusive of every other way, of pardon from God, peace and acceptance with God, justification before God, and enjoyment of God. This is the good old way, walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jer. 6:16.

O Christ, who art the only way
Unto eternal life,
Preserve and keep my soul each day
From unbelieving strife.

There's many ways that lead to death,
Which foolish men pursue:
Lord keep me in the way of faith,
The only way and true.

JUNE 7.

But that on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15.

Disciple, tread warily on this good ground. Speak cautiously about it. Lest thy soul be lifted up, and thou shouldest say, I made myself to differ. My nature is better to receive the seed, and my heart more honest and good to retain it, than others. Know thyself by nature upon a level with wayside, stony-ground, and thorny hearers. See what is predicted of these blessed hearers. Examine if we are of the happy number: if so, let us fall down in humility, and cry, what hath God wrought! Let us give all the glory to the God of all grace. (1st.) "That on good ground." It is made good by the labour of the husbandman: tilled, cultivated, and made fit to receive the seed, by the grace of the Spirit, in an honest and good heart. No man has such a heart naturally. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. See the cursed weeds it brings forth. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," etc. (Mark 7:21.) Such an old, wicked heart as this, can neither receive, nor retain the seed of the kingdom, so as to bring forth fruit unto perfection. New wine of gospel grace and love, must be put into new bottles. Therefore saith the lord, "A new heart will I give you." (Ezek. 36:26.) Precious promise! This is that good and honest heart. Hath the Lord given it thee? If so, (2d.) You will hear the word and keep it. It takes root downward. Thou hast, and dost retain an abiding sense of thy own vileness, poverty, and wretchedness. Thou wilt be rooted and grounded in the love

of Christ, knowing that in him thou art rich, righteous, and happy. As the word made thee thus wise and happy, thou wilt keep it: ponder it in thine heart: meditate upon it day and night. It will be dear and precious to thy soul. This is an evidence of a good and honest heart: it delights in the good news of the word of grace—the faithful promises of a covenant God in Christ Jesus. (3d.) Such bring forth fruit with patience. Because they keep the word in their hearts, they go on patient in well doing, and patient in suffering the will of God. Says David, “Thy word have I hid in my heart.” To what end? “that I might not sin against thee.” (Psalm 119:11.) Says St. Paul, “The word of the truth of the gospel, bringeth forth fruit in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.” (Col. 1:5, 6.) That soul in whose heart the word of grace takes the deepest root, brings forth most fruit to God. O soul, wouldst thou be more holy and more happy? Keep the word of God. Study it. That directs thee to Christ, in whom all thy happiness centres, and from whom all thy holiness springs.

JUNE 8.

Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Rev. 1:5.

Paul denounces the most dreadful curse upon every one who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 16:22.) Why does any sinner love Christ? Because he believes the love of Christ to sinners. See the awful curses of unbelief. It rejects the love of Christ: It sets at nought his salvation: It seals the sinner under the curse of his sins, the wrath due to his sins; and binds him over to eternal damnation for his sins. But the unawakened sinner smiles at all this: For he does not believe one word of it. Lord, leave not my soul under this sin of sins, of all sins the most heinous and cursed! O help my unbelief! (1st.) See the preciousness of faith. It works by love; even by the love of Christ manifested to us. It receives and embraces his love to the heart: there it works peace in the conscience, delight in God, access to God, boldness before God, joy in God, fellowship with God, conformity to God, and longing for the eternal enjoyment of God. For, (2d.) Our sins which are the cause of separation and distance from God, and shyness of God, are washed away. How? By Christ's own blood. O wonderful to think! O joyful to believe! The holy Son of God hath washed us—us unholy, us ungodly, us hell-deserving, sinners, from our sins in his own blood. He hath done it. This precious, this mighty work is for ever finished, Christ hath once appeared, for ever put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9:26.) What says his Father of him? "In my beloved Son, I am well pleased." (Mat. 3:17.) What saith he of us? "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

(Heb. 10:17.) What say you? Is all this true? is all this a fact, or a fable? Upon our belief of this depends our comfort and holiness: And from the faith of this springs glory to God in the highest. For, (3d.) If we firmly believe this, we shall joyfully join the redeemed in earth and heaven, in giving praise and glory to Christ, for washing us from our sins in his own blood. But you say, I have sin in me, I mourn over it, and groan under it. That is sense. This sense is needful to keep you humble before Christ. Yet faith is above sense. It glorifies Christ for washing away from before God's sight, the very sins you feel. You have the sense of fear, that you shall be damned for your sins. That is a holy fear. That keeps you from sinning. But faith says, "There is no condemnation to me, I am in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.) My sins are all washed away. I am perfectly cleansed from them all. And my Lord says, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Song 4:7.

Before we sinn'd Christ loved us,
And when we fell his blood he spilt:
Believe his love displayed thus,
To wash and cleanse us from all guilt.

JUNE 9.

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.
Rev. 1:6.

Christ has done a great work *for* us. But does he only call us to believe it, and then leave us just as we were, under the dominion of sin, Satan, and the world? No. He not only washes us from our sins, which he hates, in his blood, but he also dignifies our person, which he loves, by his power.

Hail Jesus, lavish of strange gifts to man!
Thine all the glory; man's the boundless bliss.

O miracle of grace! Christ hath made us kings and priests. (1st.) *Kings* to rule over sin, the world, death, and hell. Sin brought death into the world. Death reigned over all that sinned. "But they who receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life, by *one* Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17.) O believer, do not you too often forget your real dignity? Then you do not honour your *King of kings*. Consider, you are made a king to reign in *life*. A spiritual life, over all that is earthly, sensual, and devilish. Do you say, how can I reign over sin: who am the subject of sin? but you are not a subject to sin. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.) An earthly monarch may have many treacherous and rebellious subjects, who envy him, and would dethrone him: still in spite of all he may keep his throne. So do you over all rebel lusts, and traitorous dispositions. For, Christ is king over you. You reign by his power. You are a king unto God. You reign to his

glory. (2d.) *Priests.* The priest under the law, offered gifts and sacrifices according to the law. Under the gospel, we are, "A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Even those of a broken heart and contrite spirit, our bodies and souls, time and talents, prayer and praises, yea to sacrifice our lusts, our sinful selves, our love of the world, our free-will pride, all our carnal reason, and self-righteousness, all and every thing which is contrary to our Lord's will and glory. For as Christ our high-priest has offered himself to God for us, so we are to offer up ourselves to God by him. O believer, study more and more your regal dignity, and royal priesthood. Will an earthly monarch so degrade and bemean himself, as to be the companion, and gratify the humours of traitors and rebels? Will any Christian priest sacrifice to heathen idols? O when lusts present, and Satan tempts, consider, Christ hath made me a king to reign over them. When worldly vanities allure, remember, Christ hath made me a priest, to sacrifice them to his honour and glory.

JUNE 10.

Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. The just shall live by faith. Rom. 1:17.

It is but lost labour, that poor sinners rise up early, late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, in order to make themselves righteous. The Lord makes his beloved people righteous, in a very different way. Righteousness is already perfectly wrought out, to the honouring and magnifying God's law: it is fully brought into the court of heaven, to the satisfying God's justice. It is clearly revealed in the gospel, for the hope and encouragement of poor sinners. Observe, (1st.) By way of eminence it is styled "the righteousness of God." Not as it is essential to his divine nature. For what comfort, what hope can a guilty sinner take from that? The more plainly that is revealed, the more clearly that is known, so much the more miserable must it make the unrighteous sinner. But it is the righteousness with which God is well pleased, and for the sake of which he can be just, while he justifies the ungodly sinner. It is the righteousness which the Son of God wrought out in our nature, to clothe and adorn, and make us poor naked sinners, righteous and comely in God's sight. (2d.) This righteousness is revealed in the gospel. Blessed gospel! It brings glad tidings of an infinitely perfect, and everlastingly glorious righteousness. Soul, where art thou looking for righteousness? In thyself? Poring over thyself; thy frames, and thy works, to find righteousness? As well expect to find a saint in hell, or a devil in heaven, as to find righteousness in thyself. Search the gospel. There thou wilt find it revealed. The gospel is God's testimony of Jesus. He is

the only righteous man, that has ever been upon earth, since sin entered into the world. "His name is *The Lord our righteousness.*" (Jer. 23:6.) (3d.) It is revealed from faith to faith. From the doctrine of faith in the word, to the grace of faith in the heart—it runs through every page of the sacred word, down from the patriarchs, prophets, and Old Testament saints to New Testament believers, to Gentile sinners in every age. This divine and glorious righteousness is unto all, and upon all that believe. (Rom. 3:22.) Equally alike, whether faith be weak or strong. For, (4th.) The just shall live by faith. This is quite different from living by working. For the law is never satisfied with our doings, because we can never fulfil it. Therefore we can never enjoy peace of mind, but condemnation of conscience. But by faith we live, from day to day, upon Jesus our law-fulfilling head. Hence we have peace of conscience, love of heart, joy of spirit, and holiness of life. O what a sweet life is this! None know the glory of it but the faithful. It is living above nature, out of self, and beyond sin. One step more, and we shall be with Christ in glory.

JUNE 11.

Hear now, O Joshua, the high-priest, thou, and thy fellows who sit before thee: For they are men wondered at: For, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the BRANCH. Zech. 3:8.

Say, Christian soldier, did the Captain of thy salvation ever deceive thee? Did he not tell thee, before thou listed under his banner, who were his enemies, and what treatment thou wast to expect from them. His word speaks full and express on this point. Almost every page furnishes accounts, how the men of this world look upon the children of God. Here is Joshua the high-priest, with the prophets and people of God, wondered at. Jehovah himself takes notice of it, and acquaints them with it. Sweet to observe, there cannot be a disdainful frown, a contemptuous sneer, nor a reproachful word cast upon God's people, but he notices all. But why are we so much wondered at? Why truly, we are a set of visionaries. We see invisible objects; walk by faith; and have our conversation in heaven. But carnal men cannot see any of these things: how then can they wonder at us for this? Here lies the mystery. They see plain enough that you cannot live as they do, and enjoy yourself in their ways, (woe be to that Christian who does) and therefore they wonder what is come to you, and what you would be at. Soul, were you never wondered at? If not, you ought to question whether you have been faithful to your Lord, who is styled *wonderful*. (Isa. 9:6.) And he says, "Behold I, and the children which the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel." (Isa. 8:18.) Better be a wonder of Satan's children, than a slave to their master. For while the wicked wonder at, and despise us, see

the reward God gives us. Here is a blessed promise for us, which infinitely overbalances all. *Behold*, I will bring forth my servant, the *Branch*. "Jesus, your Saviour: that Branch of the Lord, who shall be beautiful and glorious." (Isa. 4:2.) That "*righteous Branch*." (Jer. 23:5.) I will bring forth to your view: so display his beauty, glory, and righteousness to the faith of your hearts, that you shall rejoice in him, with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Now Christian, you have two things to wonder at, (1st.) The astonishing rich grace of thy God. (2d.) At thyself. Art thou not a mere lump of sin, yet a miracle of mercy, and a monument of grace?

Dear Lord, my soul would thee confess
Before a wond'ring, throng:
Thou art my glorious righteousness,
My love, my joy, my song.

Lord, while I live and own thy grace,
Give me to prove its pow'r;
Lest I disgrace thy holy way,
In an unguarded hour.

JUNE 12.

Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? Gen. 40:7.

A sympathizing spirit at all times becomes Christians. They are called "to rejoice with them who do rejoice, and to weep with them who weep." (Rom. 12:15.) Joseph could not observe the sad looks of his fellow prisoners, without inquiring the cause. They said, "We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter for it." Mind the use Joseph made of the distress. He refers them to the Lord. "Do not interpretations belong unto God?" O may the Lord help us to make some improvement of this. Consider, (1st.) Christians are all fellow prisoners in a body of sin and death. (2d.) We are all subject, at one time or another, to have cause for sad looks. (3d.) We should imitate Joseph. Be of a sympathizing spirit. Feel for one another's distress. Inquire the cause of our brethren's sad looks. (4th.) As he did, so we should refer to the Lord. Aim, as enabled by the Lord, to speak a word in season, that if the Lord please, we may be interpreters to them, of God's mind concerning them; may be a means of unriddling the dark and perplexing schemes of Providence, of unfolding the mysteries of godliness to them. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2.) Consider you are under the law of Christ. This is a law of love. O what a blessing doth the Lord make one Christian to another. How often are we enabled to solve each other's difficulties, and made a mean of setting each other's souls at liberty? But, (5th.) Consider Joseph as a type of our dear Saviour. We cannot look sadly, but his eye of compassion is upon us, his heart of love is towards us. "For we have not an high-priest who cannot be

touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in *all points* tempted like as we are." (Heb. 4:15.) To one disciple in distress he saith, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. 14:31.) To others, "Why are ye troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" (Luke 24:38.) To another, a sorrowful woman, "Why weepest thou?" (John 20:15.) Think of his loving heart and tender speeches to sinners. Carry your cases of conscience to him, and spread the causes of your sadness before him. He is a blessed messenger of peace; precious interpreter of the ways of God to our souls. (Job 33:23.) He will shew us the path of life. "In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11.

My heart is pain'd, my face is sad,
Thy absence, Lord, I mourn:
Thy presence doth my soul make glad:
Return, my Lord, return.

My sins and follies I confess,
The cause of all my woe:
I plead thy blood and righteousness;
Thro' them let comfort flow.

JUNE 13.

Then is the offence of the cross ceased. Gal. 5:11.

Another version reads the words as a question, Is the offence of the cross ceased? No, nor ever will, while there is a Christian upon the earth. The cross is put for that ever-loving *Jesus*, who hung upon it as a curse for our souls, and an atonement for our sins. O let us be ever jealous of, zealous for, the glory of the cross, for the sake of *the Lamb*, who finished our salvation upon it. The cross of Christ is the Christian's glory. The offence the world takes at him, is a proof that he has taken up the cross of Christ, and is following him. This no man can do faithfully, but he must give offence. Settle this well in your mind. Sit down and count your cost. Are you willing to be Christ's glory, and the world's scorn? Do you expect all from the cross? Then give up all for the cross. Here nature recoils. Flesh and blood rebels. Carnal reason pleads, that worldly prudence may be attended to. Look at such and such a professor, they go on very quietly: the world takes no offence at him. Why is it? They are either quite dead in sin, or fallen into a deep sleep of security. Converse with them. You will find no sweet savour of Jesus upon their tongue: no warm affection to Christ in their hearts: no burning zeal for his glory in their lives. Hence, as the offence of the cross is ceased with them, so the peace, comfort and joy of it is departed from them. For the truth of this, I dare appeal to my own, and every disciple's heart. When was your soul most active for God: most filled with his love: enjoying most fellowship with him, and peace and comfort in him? Say, was it not when you lived nearest to the

cross, and found most of the offence of the cross of Christ? You must confess it. Holy Paul seemed to dread the offence of the cross of Christ ceasing. He was jealous lest any should question it. Lord Jesus, hast thou done so much in thy holy life, and suffered so much by thy precious death on the cross, for our soul's eternal salvation, and shall we be ashamed of thy cross? Shall we be afraid of confessing the faith of our hearts, and the hope of our souls in thee, with our lips and in our lives? O forbid it! Never, never shall I forget my late dear, dear friend, the Rev. Mr. Jones: with his usual warmth of affection to Christ, preaching upon the scandal of the cross, says he, "My dear friends, you who are afraid to lose your good name for Christ's sake, I pity you from my heart. Thank God, mine is gone long ago." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ." Gal. 6:14.

I'll glory in the cross of Christ,
Tho' men offended be;
'Tis thro' his blood that I am blest,
To all eternity.

Say I am foolish, I am mad,
If I Christ's comforts prove,
It ne'er shall make my spirit sad,
I'll triumph in his love.

JUNE 14.

The righteous is taken away from the evil. Isa. 57:1.

Why then do we not rejoice over the dead, who die in the Lord? Why do we, who profess to be in the Lord, fear to die? Death will be the funeral of all our evils, and the resurrection of all our comforts. Why then do we at all dread it? Why so reluctant to be taken from the many evils we suffer here? Why not rather be longing to be for ever with the Lord? Plainly, it is for want of faith. The point is not fully settled between our Saviour and our souls, whether we are his righteous members or not, and hence we do not walk closely and comfortably with him, and then the fear of death prevails over us. A believer in Jesus, and a righteous person, are convertible terms. Every believer is a living member of Christ, united to, and one with him. They are righteous as Christ is, as man and Mediator. His very righteousness is theirs. They are clothed with it, and stand perfectly righteous before God in it. Hence the Holy Spirit is given to us. He enables us to walk in the paths of righteousness, and to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory of God. (Phil. 1:11.) See the blessedness of the righteous. They are "taken away from the evil." The Lord doth this for them, because he loves them. To come, is not in the original. They are taken from all present evil. (1st.) They are taken from an evil nature. This is the grief and burden of their righteous souls from day to day. But the death of the body shall quite destroy the body of sin and death. They shall drop this body, and wing their way to endless glory. (2d.) From the evil of sin. Though this did not reign over them, yet it raged in

them. Though they were not under its dominion, yet it warred in their members, and made them cry out, O wretched! Sin brought death into the world. Death shall be the grave of sin. The righteous is not taken away in his sins, but from the evil of them. (3d.) From that evil of evils, unbelief. This now dishonours God, causes weak hands and dejected hearts. But in death we shall part with it for ever. (4th.) From all the evil of this present world. All pains, trials, afflictions, etc. from whatever cause, we shall for ever be delivered. This is the negative blessedness of the righteous. Who shall describe their positive happiness? It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the Lord hath prepared for them who love him. This we must die fully to know. O love the Lord, all ye his saints.

My Lord who gave me righteousness,
And makes me love his ways,
With ev'ry good my soul will bless,
Until I end my days.

He soon will take my soul by death,
From all my ills and strife:
His arms will then be underneath,
To raise me unto life.

JUNE 15.

Should such a man as I flee? Nehemiah 6:11.

Nehemiah was engaged in a great work. His God was with him, and gave success unto him. Friends and enemies unite against him. By base insinuation, craft and stratagem, they strove to dishearten and deter him from going on with God's work. Opposition is the Christian's lot: courage is honour: perseverance is his jewel. Look at this man of God: he boldly repels all fear. Instead of fleeing from his work as advised, he flees to his God, and cries, "O God, strengthen my hand." Faith inspires prayer: prayer brings courage to the heart. Then he boldly demands, *Should such a man as I flee!* A man so greatly favoured, so highly honoured, as to be employed by God, to work for him? No, I disdain such mean cowardice: I will work on: It is God's cause: let God see to the event; I fear it not.

Christian, know your calling: it is to work for God: expect opposition from within and without. This may call up fear and dismay. But, consider your dignity: maintain and assert it. "Should such a man as I flee?" A man called by the grace of Jesus, to resist the devil—to face carnal men—to vanquish sin—to overcome the world—to glory over death, and to receive a crown of righteousness in endless happiness: shall I flee? What I, who am called to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus? O my soul, put on Christ, and put off fear: put up prayer, and put down dread. From whom should such a man as I flee? Of whom should I be afraid? Doth not my Lord say, my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made

perfect in thy weakness? O Lord, strengthen my heart, to resist Satan, that he may flee from me, and to overcome the fear of man, which is a snare to me. I bless thee for thy precious word: strengthen my heart in the faith of it. "Fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the tails of these smoking fire-brands." (Isa. 7:4.)—Hearken unto me—fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. (Isa. 51:7.) I, even I am he who comforteth you. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker? "The Lord God will help me: I shall not be confounded: I have set my face like a flint: I shall not be ashamed: the moth shall eat up my adversaries." Isa. 50:7, 9.

Courage, my friends, Christ's strength is ours:
Tho' of ourselves we've none:
Why should we dread our hostile pow'rs?
They're conquer'd ev'ry one.

Look up and see our Saviour stand,
Pleading your cause and mine
Before the throne, at God's right hand:
Courage, our aid's divine.

JUNE 16.

We are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul. Hebrews 10:39.

There is somewhat implied in this text, which is not expressed. It was not out of the apostle's thoughts. It ought never to be out of ours. Why do we not draw back unto perdition? Is it because of our own might, power, and faithfulness? No. "But because we are *kept* by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Pet. 1:5.) Why do any draw back unto perdition? Because they do not believe the word of God: do not live upon the power of God: their hearts are not renewed by the grace of God; and they do not choose for their portion, in time and eternity, the Son of God. But they must have made some progress in the way of salvation, else how can they draw back unto perdition? Many go great lengths in profession and expressions. They are like a new moon that shines bright at the beginning, but does not last all night. They seem to begin well, to run fast, and to bid fair, with Christ in their hearts, and heaven in their view. They talk of the views of faith, and the joys of faith. But alas! time discovers, that their hearts are not vitally united to Jesus the author and finisher of faith. Therefore they obtain not the victory of faith. An unconquered world prevails against them. Unsubdued lusts get the dominion over them: and Satan makes a complete conquest over them. The lamp of profession goes out, and they draw back to perdition. Awful state! How much to be dreaded! How earnestly to be deprecated! O consider soul, there is perdition, in the least drawing back. Though you may be kept so as not to finally

perish, yet you will awfully suffer loss, if you lose the presence of Christ, the comforts of love, and the joys of faith. O this is dreadful loss! Remember, Jesus is a loving Saviour. The soul is to be saved from all evil and sin, from day to day. Faith is a living grace in the heart. By it come to Christ continually. Believe his love, his power, his willingness to save you to the very uttermost, from the power of sin, the corruption of nature, the love of the world, the snares of hell, into all the happiness and glory of heaven. O may the thought, of a possibility of drawing back from Christ, quicken us to watch and pray to him, to be kept. Study, what are the best means of strengthening your faith. Use them. What things are contrary thereto, avoid. It is by believing, we hold on and hold out. For that brings the grace and strength of Christ into the soul.

Still let our souls be passing on,
Nor ever think of drawing back:
Redeem'd and sav'd by God's dear Son,
Supplies of grace we ne'er shall lack.

God keeps us by his mighty pow'r
Thro' faith, eternal joys to see:
Tho' hard beset in some sad hour,
He'll set our souls at liberty.

JUNE 17.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever. Lam. 3:31.

“Then there is no danger of perishing. Let us live as we list: walk after the imagination of our hearts: and fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” Is this the natural language of such a faith? This the genuine influence of such a hope? This the conduct resulting from the knowledge of God’s everlasting love? Yes, say some, if we could believe such doctrine, we should so act. Such sadly betray their ignorance of the sanctifying influence of divine truth, upon the heart and life. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, says our Saviour to the expiring thief. (Luke 23:43.) Could he hence find it in his heart to say, then will I blaspheme thee again as I did just now? O no. The grace of God, which brings salvation to our souls, teaches otherwise. The goodness of God, which keeps us from hell, and preserves us safe to glory, leadeth us to repentance. And faith in the covenant love, and gracious promises of the Lord, encourages us to hope for pardon from him, because he will not cast off for ever. This was the glorious confession of the faithful, when under the severe chastising rod of God. Then is the season, to call to mind the Lord’s everlasting love and covenant faithfulness. He loves as a Father, therefore he corrects us as children. He hates our sins, at the same time that he loves our persons. If he makes us smart, it is to make us confess and pray. If he puts us into the furnace of afflictions, it is that we may glorify the Lord in the fires. (Isa. 24:15.) This cannot be done by unbelief, saying, the love of my covenant God and Father, is changed into the hatred of a vindictive wrathful enemy—he has cast

me off from being his son, and will eternally punish me in hell. Such doctrine never brought a soul back to God with genuine humility, and godly sorrow. No. It is faith in God's unchangeable love, and covenant faithfulness in Christ Jesus, that glorifies him, brings the poor sinner to him, humbles the heart before him, and causes the soul to cry out with tears of deepest gratitude, wretch that I am, by any base conduct to offend that loving Lord, who hates putting away, and will not cast off for ever! Lord Jesus grant that the belief of this truth may bind me closer than ever to thyself. We can assure our hearts of this precious truth. (1st.) "Because we are the children of God by faith in Christ." (Gal. 3:26.) (2d.) "If children then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17.) And (3d.) "We are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." 1 Pet. 1:5.

Who have such glorious cause to sing,
And triumph all their days,
As children of the heav'nly king,
Sav'd by his sovereign grace?

Not loved now, cast off anon,
This is not precious faith:
God ever loves us in his Son,
We joy in what he saith.

JUNE 18.

And killed the Prince of life. Acts 3:15.

O dreadful effects of the fall of man! We are not only become enemies to God, and rebels against him, but are also, so ignorant of ourselves, and so blind to our own state, that we do not see this: we will not own it. An enemy to God! What, to that good and gracious Lord, in whom I live, move, and have my being? I cannot think, that any one upon earth can be so wicked, as to be an enemy to God. Such is the language of blind nature. Thou that utterest it, art the man. Yea, such is the enmity of thine, of every man's nature against God, that were it possible and in our power we should *kill God*. Start not at the thought. Horrid as it is, here is proof of it. God was manifest in the flesh. How was he received? How was he treated by sinful man? Let the annals of his holy life, speak the base contempt and hellish treatment he met with from man. Let the history of his painful and agonizing death, proclaim the enmity of sinners' hearts against him. They killed—who? Jesus of Nazareth, a mere man, mighty in word and deed? a great prophet only? Infinitely more, O unparalleled mystery of iniquity! O inscrutable mystery of godliness! They killed the *Prince of Life*. Such the abominable wickedness of human nature: such the total blindness of the human heart, a murderer is preferred to an innocent man: a vile miscreant is spared, the Holy God, the Author of Life, is put to death. Here, O soul, behold the true, but the horrid picture of human nature. Such, its enmity to God, as to take away the life of the Son of God. Dost thou think in thine heart, surely my nature is not so dreadfully wicked, I could

not have done so vile a deed? Thou dost not yet know thyself. Thy thoughts proceed from blindness and ignorance, of the depth of thy totally wicked nature. As yet, thou seest not the amazing heights of the Lord's love. The Prince of Life dies, by the wicked hands of men of wicked hearts. To what end? That by his death, his very murderers should live, and not die eternally. O matchless love! Learn, O my soul, this night, to fathom the depth of the wicked enmity of the human heart, by the heights of the love of a dying Saviour. Sin has done its worst, slain the incarnate Messiah, that I might live. Satan, thou hast wreaked thy hellish wrath. But thou art conquered, in my Saviour's death. Law, thou hast sheathed thy strongest sting, and spent the poison of thy dart, in the body of my God. But glory to my Prince of Life, he lives to love, and loves to save. I am safe. O may the Spirit make this faith kill legal hopes and self-righteous confidence.

Amazing, wondrous mystery,
That men the Prince of Life should kill;
But God did suffer this to be,
To save our souls from death and hell.

JUNE 19.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Col. 2:6.

It is to the glory of the grace of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, that any sinner receives Christ; and Christ is the glory of that heart which receives him. Thus, there is a mutual complacency and delight between Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit and believing sons. Every one who believes in Christ Jesus, has received Christ as his Lord, his atonement, his righteousness, his salvation as verily as St. Paul, or any of the apostles. God is alike the Father of all such; the Son is alike the Saviour of all such; and the Holy Ghost is alike the Sanctifier and Comforter of all such. O well may the believing heart cry out in a rapture of joy, Lord, what rich grace is this! What glorious privilege am I invested with? What hast thou wrought! What am I! Why should Jesus apprehend me, worthless me, that I should apprehend him! Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Hear and obey. *Walk ye in him.* What is meant by this? In one word, seeing Christ is yours, enjoy him more and more. How? How did you receive him? As a perishing sinner by faith. Then so walk in him. Walking implies the whole of a believer's life: that his soul should be in constant motion; that the eye of his faith should be ever looking to, and his heart dependent on Christ Jesus the Lord. So, he walks comfortably, holily, steadily, and perseveringly, to the glory of his Saviour. But shall we meet with no interruptions in thus walking *in Christ*, who is *the Way*? Not from him: for he is a most smooth, delightful, and pleasant way. Only keep in him, and you are sure of safety and

comfort. But from within, and from without, you will meet with numberless objections and interruptions in your walk. The pride and the lusts of the flesh will oppose you; Satan will oppose, and strive to impede your steps; the world will attempt to seduce you. Be simple of heart. Know, every step, that you are as poor a sinner, as when you first received Christ. Make him the one object of your heart. When you are ready to halt at the sight of your weakness, poverty, and vileness, consider him. Look to him. Cry to him. So shall you "renew your strength: you shall run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint." (Isa. 40:31.) You are just at your journey's end. You have the shades of death to pass through. What of that? "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Psa. 23:4.

Now we walk in Christ by faith,
Ever hearing what he saith
In his word, unto our heart:
He from us will not depart.

Christ is a most pleasant way—
Let us from him never stray:
In him we have all things good,
Brought us through his precious blood.

JUNE 20.

Thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: the GOD of the whole earth shall he be called. Isa. 54:5.

In this one verse, is a trinity of comforts. All are enjoyed in the unity of faith. The Spirit bears witness of them. Let our hearts attend to them. Consider, (1st.) thou sin-distressed, law-accursed, Satan-accused soul, *Thy Maker is thine husband*. Glorious gospel! Faith, listen; love, awake; hope, rejoice. In the Hebrew, Thy Makers thy husband; Father, Son, and Spirit. The triune God, who made thee, is married to thee, and in covenant with thee. How is this relation effected? God the Son comes into our nature; takes upon him our flesh. We are peculiarly espoused to Christ. (1st.) By his ministers. Says St. Paul, "I have espoused you to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2.) (2d.) Experimentally, by faith. We know nothing of the loving, eternal designs of Christ to our souls, till, by the grace of his Spirit, we are brought to him, receive him, and give him our hearts, as our own bridegroom. Then we feel the blessings and enjoy the comfort of marriage union. We live in love, walk by faith, rejoice in hope. O Christ, make us and keep us chaste virgins to thee! (3d.) Christ is our *Redeemer*. Why Husband before Redeemer? I humbly conceive, to remind us of his eternal love to us; of his eternally espousing our cause; and his purpose, before time, of marrying our persons. There he took our nature, that in our nature he might redeem us to God his Father. He has effectually done it by his precious blood. Being redeemed by him, and married to him, the Father owns the relation, glories over us in him; and the Spirit

sanctifies and comforts us in him. Therefore, (4th.) as an affectionate bride glories in the person, and rejoices in the titles of her husband: so, O soul, do thou in thy heavenly Bridegroom. (1st.) He is thy Maker. He, who is almighty to create, is almighty to preserve. (2d.) He is the Lord of Hosts. What can all the powers of earth and hell do against him? (3d.) He is the God of the whole earth. The Lord God omnipotent is thy Jesus. Ever glory in him, as equal to the Father, as touching the godhead. Fools deny this. The wise unto salvation believe, adore and glory in Christ as such; who only hath immortality to bestow upon dying sinners: "To whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen." (1 Tim. 6:16.) Ever remember, we are married to Christ, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Rom. 7:4.

Wedded to the Lord! This I see—
O wondrous grace! O matchless love!
Lord, ever keep me chaste to thee,
That I may all thy goodness prove.

All other lovers I'd forsake—
My Lord, thy love has won my heart;
For tho' I'm poor, forlorn, and weak,
Christ is my all, in him I've part.

JUNE 21.

Drop down, ye heavens, from above; and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: I the LORD have created it. Isa. 45:8.

Some speak very profanely against the councils and decrees of God. This proceeds from carnal reason and ignorance of divine truths. "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets." (Dan. 2:28.) The Scriptures are a revelation of the mind and will, council, decrees, and covenant purposes of the Lord. They contain things new and old. The new covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, as well as the old covenant of works with our first parent. Hence, it is the delight of God's children to search the records of their heavenly Father. To believe them in their hearts, is a certain evidence of their being his new-born sons and adopted children in Christ. Here is a precious portion for thee to feed upon to-night. Sensible that thou hast lost thy original righteousness, in which thou wast created, behold, O soul, from whence it is restored. Not from the earth: it comes from above: by the decrees of the Lord, the heavens and the skies pour it down. The Lord spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it was brought forth. When righteousness had forsaken the earth, lo, *The Lord our righteousness* came down from heaven, to fulfil all righteousness for us, and to bestow an everlasting righteousness upon us. He came down to us as rain, as the former and the latter rain unto the earth. (Hos. 6:3.) *Let the earth open.* The Lord from heaven was made of a woman: formed in the lowest parts of the earth. *Let them bring forth salvation.* What them? Heaven and earth

united: God and man in one Christ. This is the way in which righteousness comes to unrighteous sinners. So salvation comes to perishing sinners. Both spring up together in the God-man, Jesus. *I the Lord have created it. See, O sinner, and be humble. Thou hast no hand in this matter. Canst thou create or give being to any thing? Pride, avaunt! No: creation is the Lord's work only. Jesus is the author of righteousness: he, the alone finisher of salvation. Rejoice in this new and glorious creation of righteousness and salvation. Faith receives it: hope cleaves to it: peace is obtained by it: joy springs from it. Love is excited to the righteousness of a Saviour, while the humbled sinner is kept in his right place, at Jesus' feet. Now, if this heavenly blessing has been rained down upon thy soul, it will be alive to God, spring up in his service, and bring forth fruit to his glory. What! if righteousness is poured upon thee from heaven, wilt thou continue dead in sin? No: you will approve the things which are excellent, and pray to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God, Phil. 1:11.*

JUNE 22.

The secret of the LORD is with them who fear him, and he will shew them his covenant. Psa. 25:14.

Who would trust the secrets of his heart with an avowed enemy? David could reveal all that was in him to Jonathan. Why? Because he was his loving, faithful friend. He could trust his very life in his hands. There was a secret between them two, which no one else was privy to. When Jonathan shot the arrows as a signal to David, even the lad that gathered them up, "Knew not any thing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter." (1 Sam. 20:39.) Some professors are like this *lad*. The Lord will not trust them with his secret: they would abuse it. It is common to hear such lads in religion say, Well, if I were sure that God loved me with an everlasting love, had chosen me from eternity, and would keep me by his power, through faith unto salvation, what need I care how I live? Do not such discover that they are strangers to the love and fear of the friends of God, and that as yet the Lord hath not shewed them his covenant? Out of their own mouths they judge themselves not worthy to be trusted with the Lord's secret. But the great purpose of the Lord's electing grace, everlasting love, and preserving power is with them who fear him. They cannot, they will not sin, because grace abounds. Fear prevents: love restrains. The Lord, who puts this covenant grace into their hearts, keeps it alive there. How? *He will shew them his covenant.* He will manifest more and more the glorious grace of it in Christ—how is it established upon God's precious promises, confirmed by his solemn oath, ratified by the precious blood of Christ, and all the blessings

and comforts of it, sure and certain to all the believing seed of Christ. O this keeps a holy, loving, jealous, believing fear in exercise. Do not you find it so? This is the natural effect of it. For this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thereby he at once comforts our heart, and sanctifies us unto God. While we love him as our Father, we fear him as his children. The secret of his love makes him dear to our souls. The grace of his covenant strengthens our confidence in him—keeps up fear of sinning against him. The holy, precious nature of covenant grace, everlasting love, divine faithfulness, are all secured to the seed of Christ. Meditate upon it. Give equal glory to the Trinity for it. For thus saith Jehovah, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Ps. 89:30-37.)

God proves our souls by love divine,
Thro' everlasting cov'nant grace:
And thus we know that we are thine—
We walk in fear before thy face.

But such as would thy grace abuse,
And sin, because grace does abound,
And dare affront thee to thy face,
Thy secret, Lord, have never found.

JUNE 23.

Lacked ye any thing? And they said, nothing. Luke 22:35.

Precious words to me! One is unwilling to speak of oneself. There is danger of pride and self-seeking in it. Yet, with a view to our Lord's glory, a sincere desire to exalt his grace and goodness, and to encourage fellow Christians' confidence therein, a poor sinner may speak of his experience. With tears of thankfulness, I record the goodness of my Lord to the chief of sinners. Upwards of twenty years ago, when it pleased him to call me by his grace, and make me happy in his love, my name was cast out—friends became foes—their hands were against me—they withdrew their favours from me, and derided me. Under narrow circumstances, tender feelings for a large family, carnal reasonings of my corrupt nature, and strong temptations from the enemy, I was often sore distressed. But my Lord was gracious. Many, and many a time, did he bring this text to my mind; and, as it were, with all love and tenderness, asked me, Lackedst thou any thing? I was constrained with gratitude to reply, nothing, Lord. Christ is a most precious master to serve! I have proved it. O! trust the Lord, ye his saints: for they who trust him lack nothing. So these disciples found it, though sent out in want of every thing. The hearts of all men are in the Lord's hands. He will open them, to administer to the wants of his people. O for stronger faith in him, greater love to him, and more ardent desires to please him. We have here a reproof; against all that care and anxiety about the things of this life, which so often distress our minds. What shall we say to the spirit and conduct of many professors? They have all the same anxious

cares and solicitous concerns about the world, which the men of it have. But Christ charges us, "Take no thought for your life, neither be doubtful of mind," etc. (Luke 12:22, 29.) Do they act as if they ever heard, or give the least credit to Christ? O! say they, we must do our duty, and provide for our families. God forbid any Christian should neglect this! But must we therefore act like those who know not God? Plainly, such *will* be rich. They are anxious to get a fortune: they want to be independent. Of whom? Of God. Start not! This spirit works in us all. Over some it prevails. They do not like to live so dependent on God, as every day to come to him with, "Give us this day our daily bread." O! there is more atheism and infidelity in the pursuit of such than they are aware of. How many have forsaken Christ for the love of the world! They who will be rich, fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition. (1 Tim. 6:9.) "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Lam. 3:24.

JUNE 24.

For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Tim. 6:10.

How hard to persuade a man, that there is any evil in that which he loves! Evil in money! what evil can there be in that which will purchase all things? Truly, we may say of money as one said of a pack of cards. Being asked, what harm there is in them? replied, None at all: they are very innocent things, if you will not meddle with them. So is money. But there is a curse in the *love* of it. There is the root of all evil. What mighty ills have not been done by this? Why, the love of money will dethrone God in the heart, and make a man an idolater. "Covetousness is idolatry." (Col. 3:5.) Can there in all the world be a greater evil than this? Is not this the root of all evil? Do not all evils spring from hence? Love of money was the same in the apostle's days as it is now. Some then, as well as now, coveted after it. Some! Who? Men who know nothing about the gospel, or faith? Not so; for, "They erred from the faith." So that it is plain, they either had, or professed to have had, faith. How did they err? (1st.) They mistook the nature of faith: that brings God and Christ, and heaven into the soul, and creates perfect happiness there. Money, or no money, such a soul says, the Lord is my portion; and with St. Paul, I am full. (Phil. 4:18.) But some have only an empty notion, which they mistake for faith. This brings no spiritual enjoyment into the heart. Hence they seek it in money. (2d.) They erred, or went out of the way of faith. Faith sees every enjoyment as the gift of God—is satisfied

with it, and thankful for it. But where there is a greedy, insatiable desire after money, if such persons really have faith, they will go out of the way of faith to obtain it. They will rack their very brains, distress their minds, and wear out their bodies in pursuit after riches. And what is the consequence, after all this erring from the faith? Wretched gain of riches! They pierce themselves through with many sorrows. Sorrows, to get riches; sorrows, to keep them; sorrows, how to dispose of them; sorrows, to think they must leave them. But, sorrow above all sorrows! a good God forsaken, a precious Christ despised, a glorious gospel rejected, an immortal soul neglected, for the love of money. O my dear Lord, let me see and enjoy thee as my best gain, my truest riches. May my heart cleave to thee in stedfast faith, abide in thee by sincere love, walk with thee in precious communion, die in thee with sweet tranquillity, and reign with thee in eternal glory.

What harm in money can there be?
Then why not covet more?
Lord, it allures the heart from thee,
And binds it to our store.

JUNE 25.

Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. 1 Tim. 6:8.

Man wants but little: that little not long. But unbelief multiplies our wants, and magnifies our discontent. God rains down manna. The people are delighted with it; but are not content to trust God for the morrow's supply. They gathered more than would serve for one day. What was the consequence? "It bred worms and stank." (Exod. 16:20.) Here distrust and unbelief prevailed, and abundance begot discontent. O ye rich and great, is it not so with you? And thou, O my soul, thy pittance is more than St. Paul here requires. Art thou content? No riches, without Christ, and the riches of his grace, can bring content to the mind. But when Christ vouchsafes to fulfil that precious word, (Rev. 2:17,) "I will give to eat of the hidden manna," then we shall have heart content, though we have no more coats than backs, and but just food enough to satisfy our hunger. For faith supplies all. It brings the supplier of all into our hearts. There we feed upon him by faith. The supply of our wants does not fix content in the mind. Most of them are not real, but imaginary. As wants increase, so does discontent.

That cruel something unpossesst
Corrodes and leavens all the rest.

True content arises, from the mind being brought to our state. Have we little or much? The Lord gave it. He sees best to give no more. When his will is the law, the mind is content.

See St. Paul's reasons for content. (1st.) Look back to your birth. "We brought nothing into the world." If we have nothing, we have all we were born with. (2d.) Look forward to your death. "It is certain we can carry nothing out of it." Think of your naked birth, and naked death. All we possess, we shall soon leave behind. Would you be rich? (3d.) St. Paul says, this is to fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil. O for Agur's prayer: "Give not riches." Prov. 30:8. (4th.) What is the greatest gain? Godliness with contentment. Having Christ for your food, and his righteousness your raiment, brings true content of mind. One who had nothing but bread and water, cried out in an ecstasy, what all this and Christ too! Learn more to live by faith on the Son of God. All God's promises are yours in him. This one is enough to silence murmurings, and quell the risings of discontent. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

Then what avails my anxious care,
For all things here below;
If in God's promises I share,
I'd all things else forego.

JUNE 26.

Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? Song 3:3.

An abrupt question. Very oddly stated. Had this enquirer no name for her beloved? Can she suppose every one she asks, knew who was the beloved of her soul, and was acquainted with her loss of him? The spouse of Christ here seems to be in great discomposure of mind. Just like a tender mother, who had lost the beloved son of her womb: or an affectionate wife, in search after an indulgent husband; thinking every one has heard of her distress, asks with the utmost eagerness, have you seen him? O for more of this love of Christ in our souls! Observe here, the actings of a gracious heart, under the sense of Christ's withdrawing his comforting presence. That Christ, for wise and good ends best known to himself, doth withdraw himself, is a truth that has been experienced by all his saints. You have not been long married to Christ, if you have not taken up the words of the church of old, "Verily thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour." (Isa. 45:15.) How does this affect you? O say some, we do not live upon our frames. Your frames! We are speaking of living upon Christ, and enjoying his presence: sweet intercourse, fellowship, complacency, and delight in and with him. If you are contented to live from day to day quite easy, careless and unconcerned, without this, you have got into a very bad frame indeed. It is most plain, your heart is taken up with some other vain and worthless lovers. Yea, it is much to be doubted, whether such hearts ever were in a right frame with Christ; for to loving souls, Christ's presence is their heaven; his absence causes a hell of uneasiness in their

minds. Now here is a sure evidence, whether your heart is towards Christ, or the world: your face towards heaven or hell. But do you say, it is the grief and burden of my soul, that I have lost the sense of my Lord's love and presence? If so, he has still left his love in thine heart. He still dwells there by faith. Seek for him. Inquire after him. Was he found of thee at first, when thou soughtest him not? He will not live in heaven without thee. He will not let thee live on earth, without again refreshing thy soul with the manifestation of his presence. Mark this gracious word to disconsolate seekers, "Fear not ye, for ye seek Jesus." (Matt. 28:5.) For mind, though the spouse had lost sight of Christ, her soul loves him. Still she says, "HIM whom my soul loveth." Here is the evidence of a heart truly converted to Christ. In the darkest seasons, and under the greatest distresses, there is love to Christ, and breathings after him. "The upright love *thee*." Song 1:4.

Ah, when of Christ we have lost sight,
We should for him inquire;
'Tis like a dark and stormy night,
To lose our heart's 'desire.

'Tis he creates our heav'n within,
We hence his presence love:
He frees our souls from guilt and sin,
And gives us joys to prove.

JUNE 27.

I will walk before the LORD, in the land of the living. Psalm 116:9.

When the king confers the honour of knighthood, he bestows an empty title, and nothing more. But when the King of saints calls a poor sinner into his presence, he confers on him not a mere title of an empty sound, but he dignifies him with a nature: he makes him a new creature. These two different kinds of spirits are to be avoided. (1st.) Such as under a great shew of holiness, deny the fundamental doctrines of grace. (2d.) Those who make a vile abuse of those doctrines. In the former pride reigns. Over the latter, lusts have the dominion. David reproveth both. Under the lively sense of distinguishing mercy and sovereign grace, he here makes a holy resolution. "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." What then? Now all is safe and well, I will flee to the tents of ungodliness, and gratify my lusts. Is this his language? No, nor his conduct neither. Many would be ashamed to say so, but are not [ashamed] to do so. But hearts truly alive to God, under the influence of Christ, are as dead to this conduct, as to the language.

"I will walk." Not lie down to rest in supine indolence, and indulge carnal sloth; but be in motion and activity for God and his glory. "Before the Lord." (1st.) In humility, knowing he sees how imperfectly I am in all I do. (2d.) In peace and joy, believing I am accepted in the beloved—my sins freely pardoned, and my soul fully justified in the blood and righteousness of *the Lamb*. This is the walk of faith. So we

enjoy the sense of peace, the comforts of love, the jealousy of fear, and the prospect of hope. "In the land of the living;" among living and lively saints: not with spiritually dead, or formally alive souls: not in the land of riot, among the scenes of vanity, upon the devil's enchanted ground. But in the land of light, liberty and love, where the sun of righteousness shines, and "the voice of the turtle-dove is heard," (Song 2:12.) The loving Saviour speaking affectionately to the soul. O believer, as you value the sense of God's peace, and the comforts of his Spirit: as you dread a hell in your conscience, distress in your soul, the hidings of God's face, the terrors of the law, and the tauntings of Satan, be careful of your walk: be watchful over your conduct. O study to keep Christ in the eye of your faith: his love in the view of your soul: his heaven in the prospect of your hope, and his glory the end of all, looking and praying for his grace to enable you to perform all this.

While Christ the Lord, dwells in my heart,
It makes me walk in love:
By faith, I know I have a part
In promis'd joys above.

Then, O my soul forsake the ways
Of folly, sloth, and sin:
Walk now before thy Saviour's face,
His grace abounds within.

JUNE 28.

I stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance. 2 Pet. 3:1.

All the children of God are the subjects of pure minds. Many of them complain of bad memories. All need to have their minds stirred up, and their memories quickened. There is no doubt but Peter had a pure mind, when he denied his Lord. But he seems to display a very treacherous memory, in sadly forgetting himself, his Lord, and his words. Forgetfulness of dangers, causes us to fall into them. Forgetting our own weakness to stand, causes us to fall. Consider, (1st.) What is a pure mind. That which we are all destitute of by nature. "Our mind and conscience is defiled, and unbelieving." (Tit. 1:15.) Our mind is made pure, when our hearts are sprinkled from an evil or guilty conscience, by the blood of Christ through faith. (Heb. 10:22.) So that a pure mind is a believing mind, which receives the truth as it is in Jesus, in the power and purity of it; and holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. (2d.) Such pure minds want stirring up. Do not you find it so day by day? Alas! how prone are we to neglect, forget, and let slip out of our minds, the glorious truths and precious promises of our Lord? Then we grow weak in faith, dejected in hope, cold in love, and negligent in duty. This is not right. It is an offence to our Lord, and uncomfortable to our own souls. It is neither a fit frame to live, or die in. When a fire burns dead, we stir it, to promote flame and heat. Lord grant that our souls may not burn dead, but flame in love to thee. (3d.) "I stir up." Could St. Peter stir up their minds? Doubtless, instrumentally. Beware of that cursed notion, which genders to sloth, because you have not the power to

do any spiritual act effectually, that therefore you may neglect the means. St. Paul calls on Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee." (2 Tim. 1:6.) He could, and so we ought, as those alive to God, use the means, and look to God's power to bless them. This is the genuine actings of a lively faith. (4th.) The manner of doing this. "By way of remembrance." Refreshing the memory, is stirring up the mind. Says St. Peter, "I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle to do this." We have all need of it. We ought also to stir up our own, and one another's mind, by word, and epistles, of free grace truths, everlasting love, and precious promises of God in Christ to sinners: of his finished salvation for them: the eternal glory which awaits them, and which they shall soon enjoy in his kingdom. The Lord help us thus to stir up each other's minds, while in these tabernacles.

Come Christians, stir each others' minds,
Lest slothfulness prevail:
O think and speak of Christ's designs,
Whose grace shall never fail.

We ought to help each other's faith,
And hope and joy in God:
Attend to what the Spirit saith
And spread Christ's fame abroad.

JUNE 29.

By one offering, he hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. Heb. 10:14.

We have two remarkable instances of St. Paul's holy zeal for the glory of his Lord. (1st.) Against a gross sin in the church of Corinth. This brought a scandal upon the holy gospel of Christ. (2d.) Against a legal, self-righteous spirit, which obtained in the church of Galatia. This depreciated and dishonoured the finished work of Christ, and perverted the faith of his members. It is hard to say, whether St. Paul's zeal exceeded most, in the former or the latter. Hence learn profaneness and pride, are equally contrary to the faith of the gospel. As a holy faith brings Christ, and his salvation into the heart, it casts out the love of sin, as well as self-righteous hopes. Here is a glorious truth for precious faith to fix upon. O that through the Spirit, it may bring joy and peace to our souls. Consider, who are said to be "sanctified" here? (1st.) Those who are separated and set apart by God the Father, according to his electing love. (Jude 1.) (2d.) Separated, set apart and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, to possess a holy faith in Jesus, and a holy life from him. (3d.) In what sense has Christ perfected them for ever? My dear reader, it is for want of faith in this, that we feel so much distress in our consciences, so little love to Christ in our hearts, and enjoy no more peace with God in our souls. Sin causes all this. But Christ has perfected us for ever; that is, he hath taken away all our sins, fully and finally from before God: he has so perfectly freed us from all the charges of law and justice, that there is now, not one condemnation against us, no more than

if we had never sinned. (3d.) How has Christ done this? "*One offering.*" O the love of Christ in this offering for sinners who deserved it not! O the willingness of Christ in it! "He *gave* himself for our sins," (Gal. 1:4.) O the pains and agonies he endured for our salvation! O the glorious efficacy of his offering upon the cross! He made there (by his *one* oblation of himself) satisfaction for our sins. Thus he hath once for all, and for ever satisfied the justice of God, appeased his wrath, and perfectly reconciled his holiness to us. But (4th.) How is the comfort of this enjoyed? By faith. Is this true? Yes, says St. Paul, we have the most infallible evidence for its veracity, "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us," (Heb. 10:15.) Then, as we value peace of conscience, hope of heart, and love of soul, we are bound to honour the Spirit of truth, by *faith unfeigned.* 1 Tim. 1:5.

For ever perfected by Christ,
We hope our God to see,
That makes us boldly sin resist
And from vile lusts to flee.

Christ's off'ring once upon the cross,
Through faith doth sanctify;
All else is but as dung and dross,
And cannot purify.

JUNE 30.

By one offering, he hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified. Heb. 10:14.

My soul is caught;
Heav'n's sovereign blessings clust'ring from the
cross
Rush on her, in a throng, and close her round
The pris'ner of amaze!

I beg this plea to be admitted, as an excuse for a second meditation on this text. O sinner! if you believe in a crucified Saviour, you are born of God—know the love of God—are sanctified by God—and are for ever perfected before God. All this flows from the one offering of the Son of God; bore witness to in the word, and in our hearts by the Spirit of God. This, like every other truth of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit's love and grace, is to have its use and influence upon our hearts and lives. Lord grant it may. Consider, (1st.) hath Christ for ever perfected you before God, in taking away your sins, and reconciling your person? O, then, with what holy boldness, and filial confidence, may you draw nigh to God! Heaven is open to you. God rejoices over you, and he will eternally receive you. (2d.) Hold the mystery of this faith in a pure conscience. Answer every demand, and every threatening of the law, with this *one offering*. Plead your perfection by it to divine justice. Thus you will honour, both the offering; the law, which is fulfilled by it; and justice, which his perfectly satisfied with it. (3d.) Seek no other, look not to any other object or thing within or without you, for peace

with God, and reconciliation to his favour, than the one offering of Christ. Reject with the utmost abhorrence, that proud, popish notion of more justifications than one: rejoice in that glorious one, perfected, for ever, by the one offering of the Son of God. For any attempt towards it, is an act of the greatest dishonour, highest unbelief, and vilest ingratitude to our dear Saviour. (4th.) As you are for ever perfected before God, be ever perfecting holiness in the fear of God. While this faith is kept clear and lively in the heart, it works *by* the most generous love of Christ, and works *in* us the most fervent love to him: and love is the very life of holiness. Love, and live as you will: love, and go where you will: love, and you will be dead to all that God forbids, and alive to all that he commands. (5th.) Let not the sight of your own imperfection and unprofitableness, as a miserable sinner, deject your mind, or distress your soul; so as to cause you to let go the faith, that Christ hath for ever perfected you before God. What thou hast attained, saith Christ, hold fast till I come. Rev. 2:25.

Amazing mystery! O for faith
To hold it in my conscience fast!
We are for ever perfected
In Christ our Head, from first to last.

JULY 1.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Rom. 1:16.

Says Mr. Bunyan, "Of all the men that I met with in my pilgrimage, *Shame*, I think, bears the wrong name. This bold-faced Shame would never have done. I could scarcely shake him out of my company. He would be continually haunting me, and whispering me in my ear. Indeed, this Shame is a bold villain." (*Pilgrim's Progress*.) Have you not found the same? Lord, pardon thy servant, that this shame still cleaves unto me. Lord, I am ashamed of myself, that I ever should be ashamed of thee and thy gospel. Lion of the tribe of Judah, drive away this shame from my heart. Consider, (1st.) its origin. It is begotten by pride. We are proud of our good names, our characters, our reason, and understanding, among the men of the world. If we openly profess the gospel of Christ, and live and walk under the influence of it, we cannot do as the rest of the world does. Hence, we shall soon get a nick-name; be called a Methodist, and deemed a fool, a madman, an enthusiast. Pride cannot bear this: it is ashamed of it. Then, (2d.) it works by fear. Fear says, take heed to yourself; do not go too far: keep your gospel to yourself; you will surely suffer for it; you will lose your friends, character, and business—you will set all the world against you: and then, how will you live? Thence, (3d.) you see that pride and fear are the cursed offspring of atheism and unbelief. They banish the providence of God and the promises of his grace out of our mind. Hence it is plain, that faith, a living faith in the gospel of Christ, will drive pride, fear, and shame out of the heart, with, Get ye to hell, from whence ye sprang. O!

consider the dishonour it is to precious Christ, to be ashamed of his glorious gospel. Does that bring to our souls the glad tidings of the pardon of our sins, peace with God, justification before him, and eternal enjoyment of him through the salvation of Christ? Did he make himself of no reputation for us? Did he endure the cross, and despise the shame of hanging naked upon it, as a cursed malefactor to save us? And shall we be ashamed of him? Where, then, is our faith in him, and love to him? It is one thing to be beset with shame, and another to give way to it. A lively faith begets warm love: then, shame durst not shew his base head. Without thee, O Jesus, we can do nothing. Through thy strength we can do all things. Lord, strengthen our souls in the faith and love of thee. O! suffer us never, never to be ashamed of thee, and of thy dear cross: but let us ever glory in thee, and of thee. And, dear Lord, help us, that we may never be a shame to thee and thy gospel, by an unchristian life and unholy walk.

To God we still would cleave
With ever-growing zeal!
If millions tempt us Christ to leave,
O! let them ne'er prevail.

JULY 2.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7.

Here is majesty in misery: a king in penitence: a monarch of the earth at the footstool of mercy. David as a miserable sinner, polluted with the complicated crimes of adultery and murder, is here ascribing honour to the blood of the Lamb, by the pleading of faith. Had you now asked David, what he thought of the pleasures of sin? He would have read the most affecting lecture on its exceeding sinfulness, and that almost insupportable distress, terror, and horror it brought upon his soul. Though invested with the government of a kingdom, yet he could not command away its terrors from his mind, its burden from his conscience, nor its pollution from his soul. He now found the words of his Son fully verified, "Whoso breaketh through a hedge, a serpent shall bite him." (Eccles. 10:8.) He had broken through the hedge of God's law, and that old serpent who tempted him, now stings and torments him. But when Nathan had convinced David of his transgressions, so that he cried out, "I have sinned," did not the prophet add? "The *Lord* also hath put away thy sin," (2 Sam. 12:13.) Yes. Nevertheless, this penitential psalm was written after this. From whence we may infer, (1st.) That though sin is put away by the Lord Jesus in the court of heaven, yet the convinced sinner may not enjoy the comfort of this in his own conscience. (2d.) There may be true faith in the blood of the Lamb, that it cleanses from all sin and yet the soul left to cry out under the pollution of sin. (3d.) A regenerate soul is as much concerned to be cleansed from the pollution of sin, as to be comforted with pardon for sin. (4th.)

That true faith manifests itself in the heart, by its turning away from every thing, and turning to that blessed fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Not my tears of repentance, but thy precious blood, O Lamb of God, can wash me. Precious word! "The blood of the Son of God cleanseth from ALL sin." (1 John 1:7.) (5th.) Faith ascribes the utmost efficacy to it, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." I shall be as free, and as fair, from the least stain of sin in God's sight, as if I had never sinned: "Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. 5:27.) Hence learn, (1st.) As you value the sense of God's love and peace of conscience, beware of sin. (2d.) If you sin, flee instantly to the blood of the Lamb to be cleansed, and to no other remedy. (3d.) Believe, wait, and pray. No power can forgive sin, nor cleanse from it, but that Lord against whom it is committed. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

See, God is reconcil'd,
Behold his smiling face,
Let joyful cherubs clap the wings,
And sound aloud his grace.

JULY 3.

The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son: for he should not stay long in the place of breaking forth of children. Hos. 13:13.

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. (Prov. 22:15.) Though God's children are made wise unto salvation, yet folly is bound up in their nature. Their conduct discovers it, and proves the necessity of the rod of correction to drive it from them. Here is a threatening—a charge—the reason for it—and a most precious promise from the Lord. (1st.) The threatening. God loves his children too well, to spare the rod and spoil them. "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. 3:12.) Therefore painful sorrows, like those of a travailing woman, come upon them. Nature's pains prove nature's remedies. The painful visitations of love, prove spiritual remedies to the soul: they bring forth abundant blessings. O ye children of God, beware of construing love tokens of afflictions, into black marks of hatred. (2d.) The charge. "He is an unwise son." My dear heavenly Father, what great reason hast thou for this charge against me? O in how many ways have I displayed my folly! Though thy wisdom sees it, yet thy loving, gracious heart does not disinherit, but thou sayest *son*, still. "Faith works by this love," all hope and peace in the conscience, and holiness of life. (3d.) See the reason of the charge. "He should not stay long in the place of breaking forth of children." This was fulfilled in the conduct of the disciples. Christ compared them to a woman in travail: told

them they should "weep and lament, and be sorrowful," but adds, "your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:20.) Yet they were unwise sons. They staid too "long in the place of breaking forth of children." Instead of being delivered of their pains and sorrows, by faith in their Lord's death, they indulged them. Hence our Lord upbraids them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." (Luke 24:25.) Do not fall under this reproof also. Do you act as a wise or an unwise son? Where are you? Has faith in your Lord delivered you of your pains, and brought forth joy? Or, are you still staying in the chamber of labour, sighing and sorrowing under bondage to fear, instead of rejoicing as children of God? This is really the case with many disciples now: they walk not in the glorious liberty of the children of God: they do not in their minds and consciences stand fast, triumph and rejoice in Christ's finished salvation; but are poring upon what they are in themselves. (4th.) Look at the precious promises of your Lord, "I will ransom and redeem them," etc. (Hos. 13:14.)

JULY 4.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. Neh. 8:10.

This is a precious, evangelical chapter. Glorious gospel truths are here held forth to us. Lord, help us to see them, and feed upon them. Here is, (1st.) a solemn observation of the feast of tabernacles. This was appointed by the wisdom of God the Father, (Lev. 23:34.) Did God solemnly command the people to dwell in booths for eight days, but to some glorious end? Christ is the substance of the whole law: here is a shadow of him. Here is typified, God's beloved Son, who was to tabernacle in our flesh, and all the Father's glory to dwell in him. (2d.) "The people gathered together as one man." So, "Unto Shiloh, the Messiah, shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10.) (3d.) Ezra the priest reads and expounds to them the law, in the open street: (much such another crime as field preaching) the people were convinced of sin, and wept. The law ministers death and condemnation to them. Here is the office of the Holy Ghost, in convincing of sin, and comforting them by faith. (4th.) Ezra preaches the gospel to them, and says, "Weep not—neither be ye sorry." No! not when their hearts were wounded by sin; the terrors of a broken law fell upon them; and when they saw justice armed with vengeance to destroy them? No: for, says he, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." How so? A glorious ray of Christ's rich love, and marvellous grace to sinners, beam forth here. See what is the joy of the Lord. Our precious Lord Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, "*For the joy that was set before him*, (of saving us miserable sinners) endured the cross, despising the shame," (Heb. 12:2.) Look unto

Jesus. Meditate on this joy of your Lord. Though he was to suffer the most excruciating pains and agonies on the cross—be exposed to public shame and infamy as a malefactor, hanging naked; yet such was his joy in saving his dear people from hell, to be glorified with him eternally in heaven, that he patiently endured all, and cheerfully despised all this. O! such love, such grace, such joy, never dwelt but in the heart of an incarnate God! Sinner, this joy of the Lord is your strength and mine; the faith of this creates the highest joy in our souls: and this joy inspires our hearts with strength and courage against all our enemies. For we are more than conquerors, through Christ who loved us, and had such *joy* in saving us. O to think I am a poor, weak, and vile sinner from day to day—surrounded by the most subtle and powerful foes, is enough to make our hearts faint, our knees feeble, and our hands hang down. But, O the joy, the strength it inspires the soul to know, “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.” Zeph. 3:17.

The joy which cometh from the Lord,
Our daily strength shall be:
It's reap'd by faith in his good word,
Who hung upon the tree.

JULY 5.

Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. 2 Pet. 1:10.

Work for life, say the sons of ignorance and pride. Work not at all, Christ has left us nothing to do, say the sons of sloth and licentiousness. But, say the sons of wisdom, we labour and give diligence in the ways of God, not in order to obtain life; not to be saved for what we do; but to enjoy more of the life of Christ, the love of God, and the assurance of his Spirit, that we are his children. To this Peter exhorts. *Brethren!* Ye who profess to believe in the Son of God, and long to know assuredly that ye are the children of God, "Give diligence." Do not rest in a few idle wishes, cold desires, and formal duties, but be earnest—be active—be upon the stretch for God. As we say, leave no stone unturned. Study the Lord's word of grace—dwell upon the rich promises of his love—meditate upon the finished salvation of Christ—confer with his people—be fervent in prayer—strive against sin—resist Satan—deny the flesh—cry for the witness of the Spirit, etc. All this, say you, is very good; but I want power to do it. Have you a will to do it? Then the Lord who gave you a will, will strengthen you by his power, while you are found in these things. Nay, say not, you wish to be happy in God, if you neglect to be diligent in the ways of God. For what is this but solemn mockery of God, and sadly deceiving your own soul? Consider the end of this diligence, "To make your calling and election sure." (1st.) Your calling. There is a general call of the gospel, to every sinner who is within the sound of it. Some rest in this. This is not meant. But a special and effectual call, from a

death in sin, to life and salvation in Christ: From a proud hope and vain confidence in ourselves and our works, to a lively faith in Christ, and comfortable fellowship with God. (2d.) Your election. This is a frightful word to many. They fight strongly against it. As they believe there is no election of grace, they cannot labour to make their own sure. The apostle leaves such to their own carnal notions. While he assures real believers of this truth, that some are elected according to the foreknowledge of God, (1 Pet. 1:2.) and urges them to diligence, to obtain the assurance of their own interest therein. So that you see the doctrine of election, so far from encouraging sloth, is the very spring of diligence and activity. The Lord give us a right judgment in all things; for this will influence to a right walk, and godly conversation in Christ Jesus.

Called to run the heav'nly race,
With Christ my prize in view
I will be diligent, through grace,
With vigour to pursue.

My soul, nor tire, look back, nor faint,
Look up to Christ for peace;
He will give joy to ev'ry saint,
From doubts and fears release.

JULY 6.

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. 2 Pet. 1:10.

Without election there had been no Saviour given: no salvation wrought out: no promises made: no Spirit sent: no sinners effectually called to be saints: no love from God to comfort them; nor any heaven open to receive them. O how do poor sinners fight against their own mercies, when they call in question and reject the electing love of God. But, says one, I tremble to think, if I should not be one of the elect, what a dreadful thing would that be? Not at all more dreadful, but just the same, as if there had been no election. But what kind of argument is this, against any truth? Suppose a profane sinner says, if there is a hell, and I should be one of the damned, what a dreadful thing would that be? What does this prove? People are apt to stand in nature and self, and judge of the truths of God. Hence they have hard thoughts of a God of love. Behold, I shew unto you a more excellent way: far better to give diligence, to make your election sure, than to cavil and dispute about what is a plain article of Christian faith. Disputes seldom promote love; but assurance of our election will. Your fear and trembling, lest you should not be one of the elect, is a sure evidence, that you are not stupid and thoughtless about salvation. It is "with fear and trembling you are called to work out your own salvation, remembering it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12.) By his grace, study diligently to make your election sure. There is no election to salvation, but in Christ. Sinners are chosen: justified; sanctified, and saved in

him, with an everlasting salvation. The faith of God's elect, cordially receives and embraces these truths, and lives upon Christ, to enjoy the comfort of them. Such a believing soul, cannot but breathe out its sighs, and send up its prayers for the Holy Ghost to bear witness with his Spirit, that he is a child of God. Says St. Peter, prove the sincerity of these, and that your heart is in earnest, to enjoy this assurance, by giving diligence. Self-love may excite a desire after comfort. But if faith works by love, to the truths of God, it will make you diligent in the ways of God. O the unspeakable joy, when the comforting Spirit bears witness to the soul, of the Father's love in Jesus: that I am a child of God, through faith in Christ, that my sins are pardoned through his blood, and my person justified in his righteousness. This is glory begun below, by a heaven of love, possessing the sinner's soul. Then he says, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

Thou Life of lives, Life of my soul,
Me quicken ev'ry day;
O let not sloth my pow'rs control,
Not let me ever stray.

JULY 7.

Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.
Psalm 72:17.

"Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10.) This curse, God hath never revoked. Every man upon the earth is naturally under it. But the greatest curse is, men neither believe it, feel it, nor care for it. Hence they slight and disregard that dear *Man*, who was made "a curse for us," that we might be blessed in him. Says our Lord, "search the scriptures, they testify of me," (John 5:39.) Here is a sweet testimony for our mind, and precious food for our faith. Jesus, Master, bless me while I meditate on it. (1st.) See all blessedness in Christ. Well might Luther say, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." That is, God without a mediator. O sinner, O saint, there is nothing but curse and wrath for us, out of Christ. There is a hell of sin in our nature. The pride of the devil, and the lust of the beast dwell in our flesh. Spirit of God, give us to know this more and more, to the humbling of our hearts, and to the prizing of our dear Immanuel. For in Christ there is nothing but blessedness. We are blessed IN him. Blessed be his God and Father, who *hath* blessed us, with *all* spiritual blessings *in Christ*, according as he hath chosen us IN HIM before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:3.) These are the precious foundation truths of our blessedness. Faith receives them, and works by the love of them. (2d.) Not only blessed IN, but blessed BY Christ. As our covenant head, he hath every blessing for time and eternity to bestow upon his members. We have not only a notion of

this, but the enjoyment of it. Christ is the author of our faith. He gave us faith, that we might feed on him in our hearts, have fellowship with him in our spirits, and have all things in common with him, which our Father's love can bestow, to make us blessed and happy. (3d.) Men, miserable, sinful men, shall not only be blessed IN and BY Christ, but shall bless themselves IN him. This is a sweet art. Holy Spirit, teach it us from day to day. Though we find ourselves vile, miserable, and cursed, yet let us bless ourselves in the Lord: boast of him, glory in, and rejoice for what Christ of God is made to us. Lastly, Men shall call Christ blessed. The most blessed objects their eyes ever saw, or their hearts ever knew. The paper fails. [The author had written to the bottom of the page.] Lord make up in spirit what is wanting in letter. There is no end of speaking, dear Lord, of thy blessedness.

In Christ I am for ever blest,
Tho' sin and law condemn me still:
Christ is my refuge and my rest,
Let carnal sense say what it will.

Faith lifts me out of nature's views,
And judges not by carnal sense:
When on Christ's love I sweetly muse,
It drives all slavish terrors hence.

JULY 8.

God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. 5:9.

Here is a precious negative, a glorious positive, and happy souls. Lord help us to meditate upon them, to our profit. (1st.) The negative. "God hath not appointed us to wrath." St. Paul has in his eye, what our proud nature cannot bear to hear of, the sovereignty of God. It is as though he had said, we are all by nature children of wrath. We have all by practice deserved wrath. Here is myself, the other day I did not know the Son of God, but persecuted him and his servants. If God had dealt with us according to our just deserts, we should have suffered his eternal wrath in hell. Is your conscience convinced of this? Do your eyes see it? Does your tongue confess this? Does your heart fear this? Rejoice with wonder. That just God, who had a sovereign right, yet will not appoint you to wrath for your sins. If you have trembled under a sense of wrath, now rejoice at the sound of everlasting love. For, (2d.) Here is a glorious positive. "God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Ye poor, short-sighted beings, who talk of a possible salvation—of being brought into a salvable state—of a conditional salvation, suspended upon certain terms we are to perform, and of one knows not what unscriptural jargon. Behold and stand reprov'd. For ye weaken faith, deject hope, and damp love, in an absolute, sure, and certain salvation: appointed by God, for those who deserved wrath: even the salvation, the finished salvation of our Lord Christ. This, this is the blessed foundation for faith, the spring of hope, the source of love.

(But 3d.) Who are appointed to obtain it? I hope we will allow the Lord of all, the liberty which we mortals take, of appointing whom he pleases to live with. US; (1st.) whom God hath pleased to appoint. (2d.) US, for whom Christ died. (3d.) US, who are not in darkness. (4th.) US, who are the children of the light, and of the day. These characters stand in the context. Are they yours? Has God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in your heart to give you the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Have you seen such glory in the face, the offices, the work of Christ, that you choose him for your Saviour, and trust him for your salvation? O fall down and adore sovereign love and free grace! God has as surely appointed you to salvation, as he did St. Paul or any of the apostles. Who shall disappoint God? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31.)

We all deserve eternal wrath,
As the just wages due to sin;
But God appoints to all who've faith
In Christ, salvation to obtain.

Then what shall disappoint our God?
Or ever frustrate his intent:
O magnify his name abroad,
And love and praise him ev'ry saint.

JULY 9.

—*One mediator between God and man, the man CHRIST JESUS.* 1 Tim. 2:5.

O my fellow sinners, I heartily congratulate your soul and my own for this blessed truth! Lord help us to live upon it in our consciences from day to day. For it is not a speculative, but an experimental truth. It enters into the very essence of our faith, is the very life of our hope—lies at the foundation of our peace—and is the very source of every blessing and comfort. If we are not continually looking to this ONE mediator JESUS, we lose the peace of faith, the comfort of hope, the fellowship of love, and get into perplexity of mind. Then, we do not draw nigh to God with confidence, stand before him with boldness, nor cheerfully walk with him in love and holiness. Consider, (1st.) A mediator stands as a middle person, interposing between two parties at variance, to make peace and reconciliation. This, Christ hath perfectly done. He hath for ever made peace by the blood of his cross. (Col. 1:20.) Sin was the cause of variance between God and us. But Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9:26.) Thus the work of reconciliation is finished respecting God. But, (2dly.) Jesus hath a work to do with us. For we are naturally alienated from God, and enemies to him in our minds: this is manifest by our wicked ways. But says the apostle, "you hath he now reconciled." (Col. 1:21.) Is it not so with you? Has Christ, by the persuasive eloquence of his tongue—the affecting oratory of his love, and the sweet power of his Spirit, conquered the rebellion of your will, subdued the stubborn pride of your heart, and gained your

affections for God? Yes, say you. But I am such a miserable sinner, I fear God will not receive me, I have so much sin in me, I think he cannot be reconciled to me, and at peace with me. Nay, but if Jesus had not been a mediator for miserable sinners full of sin, St. Paul had been damned, all the apostles in hell, and every saint, now in glory, would have been in endless torment. All the comfort of Christ's mediation is enjoyed by faith. (3d.) Christ lives to keep up perfect reconciliation between God and us. O, that is a most precious word. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5:10.) Look back to the atonement of Christ on the cross—look up to the intercession of Christ at the right hand of a reconciled God—look forward and see heaven open to receive you, and the arms of a loving Father to embrace you.

When sin and Satan me assault,
And strive to break my peace:
I dare not say, I have no fault,
But Christ shall me release.

Christ ever stands before the throne,
His precious work to plead:
Hence guilt and wrath from me are gone;
He brings the peace I need.

JULY 10.

Fear ye not. Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD.
Exod. 14:13.

The people of God were now in a great strait, even at their wits end. Perish they must, to all human appearance. A wide ocean is before them. Inaccessible mountains surround them. An enraged monarch pursues them. Death in various shapes presents itself to them. Yet, for all this says Moses, "Fear not." Peevish unbelief and carnal reason might suggest, what! not be afraid, when inevitable destruction must be our doom? Why will Moses talk to us after this mad, enthusiastic rate? But in the view of apparent destruction, Moses tells them of a certain salvation, and commands them to stand still and behold it. We do not hear one word from Moses, to soothe their fears, or comfort their minds, from any considerations of what they were in themselves, what good works they had done, what terms and conditions they had performed to entitle them to the Lord's favour, etc. No. But they were at this very moment, indulging carnal reason, and the murmurs of unbelief. "Why hast thou brought us forth? Better to serve the Egyptians, than to perish here," etc. Hence observe, (1st.) In times of difficulty, in seasons of distress, when sin rages, conscience accuses, the law condemns, carnal reason suggests, unbelief prevails, and we poor sinners are at our wits' end, seeing justice pursuing, all hope and help failing, and despair at the door, when the salvation of Jesus is to be looked unto. In such seasons, how doth this quell our fears, compose and comfort our minds! But, (2d.) What is it to *stand still*, and see the salvation of the Lord? Is it to cease

from prayer and all other means of grace, and as some say, be still: stir not hand nor foot in the way of duty? No, For contrary to this, the Lord ordered the people to "go forward." What is it then, but in the midst of fears, in the sight of danger, and in the dread of destruction, to cease from all self-confidence, to attend to the voice of the Lord, to rely upon his gracious promises, and quietly to hope for his great deliverance. For, O precious word! says Moses, "The Lord shall fight for you:" and what then? "Ye shall hold your peace." How soon, how effectually did the Lord do this? He both destroyed their enemies, saved them, silenced all their unbelieving fears, and unreasonable murmurings. They saw their enemies no more for ever. Stand still, O soul, admire, adore, love, and confide in, a gracious, wonder-working, sin-saving Lord. Look on thine enemies, as the foes of thy Lord. He hath promised their destruction and thy salvation. Rejoice to think of that day when thou shalt see the Lord in glory, and thine enemies no more for ever.

Stand still, my soul, salvation view,
As finish'd by thy Lord;
Reject thy fears, believe anew,
Thy Lord's supporting word.

JULY 11.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Isa. 61:10.

It would be surprising to see a malefactor going to execution, singing and rejoicing all the way. But, if, when he came to the fatal place, he should produce the king's free pardon, with royal promises of being admitted to his presence and appearing at court, in the richest robe of the king's providing, our wonder would cease. We should own that he really had abundant cause for joy. Come, my fellow-condemned malefactors, though sin has stripped you of your innocent dress of righteous clothing; though you are under the sentence of death, yet behold, here is a pardon for you, the best robe to put upon you, and a sure promise of admission into the king's presence. Read it and rejoice. "*Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.*" (Rom. 5:21.) The God of righteousness clothes us naked sinners with the garments of salvation, and adorns us with the robe of righteousness, which our heavenly Bridegroom wrought out for us. This is the blessing of being married to Christ by faith. This is the joy of faith. This causes joy of soul, and great rejoicing in *the Lord our righteousness*. When all sense of comfort and feelings of joy, in nature are dead, yet, in Jesus our covenant-head, we have a never-failing source of comfort, and an inexhaustible spring of joy. Faith leaves nature behind, with all its sins and miseries. It looks neither to works, nor worthiness, in self; but considers what Christ is to

the soul, and what the soul is in him, righteous, perfect, and everlastingly righteous. O! then joy, great joy, springs up. See the claim of faith, "My God." Though faith does not cause the Lord to become our God, nor adopt us into his family; yet it claims that peculiar and precious interest in him, which the word of his grace reveals. The Father draws us by his Spirit, to his Son for righteousness. The Spirit bears witness that we are righteous in his Son. Then faith makes the claim, boasts of it, and glories in it. Then Jesus has our hearts and our hopes. Our affections are placed on him: our hopes centre in him. Then we find our God in Christ. We call him *my* God: Abba, Father. We are at peace with, and joyful in him. We proclaim our joy in our God. What! clothed with the garments of salvation, which we wrought not! covered with the robe of righteousness, which we spun not, and not be joyful! O believers, be ashamed of your unbelief. It damps your joy: it withholds the glory of your heart.

Rejoice, my soul, in Jesus,
And walk before him all thy days:
When naked, poor, and destitute,
He fed and cloth'd thee with rich suit.

JULY 12.

Every one who useth milk, is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. Heb. 5:13.

This is a sharp reproof. As then, so now there are many who need it. The word rendered *unskillful*, in the margin of our bibles, is, hath *no experience*. Christian experience is much talked of, but too little understood. Many are ready to give a long detail of experience which they have had of one thing and another, but you can find nothing of the word of righteousness in it. It all begins in self, ends in self, and tends to exalt self. O! there is a great deal of self-seeking, self-soothing, and self-complacency, in what is called Christian experience. But real Christian experience is that inward proof or trial, which our minds have of *the word of righteousness*; how the belief of it has brought relief to our guilty consciences, ease to our troubled souls, and rest to our weary minds. From hence, Christ, the sum and substance of the word of righteousness, becomes precious, sin hateful, ourselves vile, our righteousness filthy rags, the world contemptible, the path of duty pleasant, the way of holiness delightful, and fellowship with God most highly estimable to our souls. This is Christian experience indeed. But all experience which is talked of, that does not arise from the word, is not agreeable to the word, and is not supported by the word of righteousness, is fancy, whim, and delusion. Many use milk, and are babes. They are unskillful; have no experience of the word of righteousness; God's everlasting, electing love and covenant grace to sinners in Christ—yet saving them to all good works by the grace of Christ; the

sovereign efficacy of the Spirit, in bringing them to Christ; and their certain perseverance, and sure salvation, being kept by the power of God, through faith in Christ. Though the word of righteousness holds forth these glorious truths, as plain as though written with a sunbeam, yet such babes cannot bear them: their stomachs heave against them: their spirits rise with indignation against them. They can only feed upon milk and pap, like babes: they wrangle and cry like babes, if you put strong meat into their mouths. Therefore, they cannot, they do not grow strong in the Lord Jesus Christ: they are content with the first principles of Christianity: they are not going on to perfection, and growing up into Christ Jesus in ALL THINGS. O! get beyond such babyish experience. Prize highly the word of righteousness. Bring all your experience to it. Draw all your comfort from it. Judge of your state by it. Be clothed with humility. Fight not against God's sovereign purposes, council, and covenant. Put on that Spirit, and pray to the Lord, "That which I see not teach thou me." (Job 34:32).

JULY 13.

Saul said to David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine, to fight with him: for thou art but a youth; and he a man of war from his youth. 1 Sam. 17:33.

We frequently use the phrase, *carnal reason*. What do we mean by it? Just what Saul here used to David. It is the reason of the flesh: it consults the nature and appearance of things only: it judges of and determines events according to human probability entirely: it looks to no other or higher cause, than nature and sense. Now, had David listened to, and obeyed, this sort of reasoning, he would have brought no honour to his God, nor wrought deliverance for his people. But observe, O my soul! David opposed faith to this carnal reasoning, and by faith overcame it. There was not one word of the Lord in Saul's mouth. But David introduced, "the Lord the deliverer." Like St. Paul, "he conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1:16.) But being valiant in faith, he overcame the gigantic foe, in the name, relying upon the power of an omnipotent Lord, and thus he obtained a glorious victory. Most excellent lesson for us. Christian! ever consider your carnal reason as a home-bred enemy, a domestic foe, that opposes your Lord's truth, with, How can these things be? It disputes your Lord's commands, with, Hath the Lord forbidden this? Doth he require that? It dares cavil against the mysteries of grace and wants them to be explained to the judgment of carnal conception; or else exclaims, reject them as absurdities. How often has this enemy put you to the stand, when you should have followed your Lord? how often caused your hands to hang down, when they should have

been lifted up to the Lord? how often caused you to lay aside the weapons of your warfare, when you should have fought the good fight of faith? Treat it as an enemy to your Lord's glory, and your soul's comfort. Refuse it audience. Remember, the antidote against it is, simple faith in divine love. This brings the enjoyment of God into the heart; engages his power in our defence; arms the soul with fortitude against every enemy, which carnal reason represents as too formidable to stand against. Yea, faith takes up this triumphant language: "More than conqueror, in all these things, through Christ who hath loved us," (Rom. 8:37.) And boldly challenges, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" (verse 33.) O that little word *elect!* how does carnal reason fight against it!

My reason proud resists my faith,
And often dejects my heart:
Instead of trusting what God saith,
Our souls at dangers start.

This is a sin we should confess,
And cry unto the Lord,
With strength'ning faith our souls to bless,
And courage from his word.

JULY 14.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Song 8:5.

Who! the wonder and joy of angels, the envy of devils, the contempt of the world, because a miracle of grace. Upon whom shines the glory of God's justice, the riches of mercy, the abounding of his love, and the efficacy of his power? It is, a poor sinner, hopeless, and helpless in himself, coming up from a dismal, dreadful, dangerous state, leaning upon one who is mighty to save. Some over-rate Christians. They paint their characters so very strong and perfect, as though they forgot that they are in themselves nothing but poor sinners, whose nature is only evil continually. And these people also under-rate them, not considering what they are in Christ—new creatures, perfectly righteous—without spot of sin—infinitely glorious and comely in God's sight. Consider, (1st.) this wilderness. You are in it, and will be coming up out of it, till you get out of the body. It is your fallen nature, called flesh. It is inhabited by none but beasts of prey and devils of destruction: cursed sins and abominable lusts. There is no path in it to life, only to death and damnation. Though you are out of it, as to your state, yet you are really in it, as to your experience. Therefore you are still coming up from it. How? (2d.) Consider this posture: *Leaning*. It implies weakness, weariness, languor, fainting: yet aspires to ascend, to get on and get out. Do not you find this exactly your case? You are weary of the wilderness of nature and sin, and long to get out of it; yet find not strength in yourself to ascend. Bless your soul, that you have *a Beloved* to lean upon. He is

your Beloved, if you take him as such. You will find him the Beloved of your soul indeed, if you lean upon him. (3d.) What is it to lean upon Jesus? (1st.) It is to cast yourself, the whole weight of yourself, sin and misery upon him, as having undertaken to support and sustain you. (2d.) To join or cleave to him, and associate with him; refusing all other props and supports but him. (3d.) To rejoice and delight your soul in him and in the company of him. (4th.) To strengthen yourself in him, and get strength from him. Just as a weak person does by leaning upon a staff in his journey. Jesus is all this to the mind by faith. Well then is he called our *Beloved*. What remains, but that we prove his love by the faith of our hearts? So let us glory of him, and honour and serve him as the beloved of our souls; till, leaning upon him all our journey through the earth, we come to enjoy him in heaven.

I'll trust, and lean, and sweetly sing
Of my Beloved dear;
Tho' I'm weak, in want of ev'ry thing,
He doth my spirits cheer.

I have no strength, support, or hope,
But what from Christ doth spring:
His love does keep my spirit up,
While faith's kept on the wing.

JULY 15.

But the body is of Christ, (or is Christ.) Col. 2:17.

There is not a greater instance of the depravity of the human mind, and the blindness of the understanding, than its seeking happiness in the shadow of things, instead of the substance. What is all created good, but the shadow of him who created it? Yet we are prone to grasp at the shadow, and seek to be satisfied with it, while we neglect God the substance. But all, like a shadow, eludes our embraces. Still we are restless and pursuing. It is just the same in spiritual things. We are prone to take up, and rest satisfied with the shadow of things, without the body, which is Christ. Yea, so foolish are we, that unless we are kept, even after we have known the substance and fulness of Christ, and see that we are complete in him, we turn again to trust in the shadow of our own works and duties. This is awful! "But the body is Christ." (1st.) Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have put the glory of every attribute and perfection of the Godhead, in the body of Christ. "In him dwelleth the fulness"—no; that is not right—"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9.) God the Father says, "Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. (Isa. 42:1.) God's soul can delight in nothing but where his glory is. Again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5.) God cannot be well pleased with any one, who is not like himself, perfect in holiness, righteousness, and truth. These, not one of all the human race is possessed of: therefore, God is so far from being well pleased with us, as we are in ourselves, that he hates and abhors us. But, (2d.) here is our special mercy, God

loves us; he hath chosen us, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in the body of Christ. By Christ's body we are redeemed from all our sins. "For he bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) In Christ's righteous body, we are justified and sanctified. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ, once for all." (Heb. 10:10.) Yea, "By his one offering, he hath *for ever* perfected them who are sanctified." (ver. 14.) Therefore, (3d.) "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us." (ver. 15.) This is his blessed office, to glorify Christ to our view and in our hearts. The Father calls on us to *behold* Christ, and to *hear him*. The Holy Ghost enables us to do this, and fills us with all joy and peace in believing in the body of Christ. Here, then, things are brought to one single point. All our righteousness, holiness, peace, comfort, and joy, are in the body of Christ. Are God and we agreed? Has God put all his glory there? Then let us seek all our happiness therefrom.

O, my friends, let us remember
That Jesus is our loving Head!
Each believer is his member,
And shall on sin and Satan tread.

JULY 16.

Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image. Gen. 5:3.

Not in the image of God, in which Adam was created, but after the likeness of himself, an apostate spirit, fallen from God, into all the cursed, proud, wrathful tempers of a wicked devil, and all the vile, filthy lusts of a brute beast. Awful difference between God's creation, and man's procreation! Where can we turn our eyes, but we see the dreadful effects of it? The Holy Ghost hath left this truth upon record for our instruction. Consider, (1st.) that we are begotten sinners, not created such by God. David confesseth this: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5.) He does not charge his sinful nature to God, and impiously demand, *Why hast thou made me thus?* Ever beware of such doctrines, which have the least tendency to make a holy God the author of sin. (2d.) See whence you sprung. Boast not of your high birth and noble pedigree. You were born a sinner, under wrath and curse, and must shortly turn to ignoble dust. "Be clothed with humility." (3d.) Trace the filthy streams to their corrupt fountain. Look not only at your sins, but consider your sinful nature also. These are only the fruits; that, the root from whence they sprung. Says our Lord, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." (John 3:6.) Earthly, sensual, and devilish. I know, says St. Paul, in my flesh, or fallen nature, dwelleth no good thing. (Rom. 7:18.) The flesh is part of you. Never expect the old man to be changed into a new one, or flesh into spirit. Be content to leave it as you find it, an enemy to the Spirit. Treat it as such:

crucify its lusts: resist its notions: subdue its desires: put off the old man from day to day. (4th.) View the glorious method God has taken, for your recovery from your fallen state. O love and adore him for it! Does he repair, alter, and amend what is amiss in the old creation? No: this very notion is a species of deism. But by a new creation, making *one new man*. (Eph. 2:15.) Even the Lord from heaven becomes the Son of man, that we may be the sons of God IN him. The Spirit begets us again unto him. We are new creatures in him. Thus, we are born again into a new creation. Here we live holy and happy, in perfect acceptance with God, and enjoy fellowship in his love, as our heavenly Father. As we see our own vileness, we are commanded to put on this *new man* by faith, day by day. And beholding his glory, we are changed into his image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18.

Born into Christ, the second man,
We have a nature new;
Hence holy strife in us began,
Which proves us Christians true.

JULY 17.

Of whom I am chief. 1 Tim. 1:15.

What a mighty change does grace make! The apostle was once, in his own eyes, the chief of saints. If but two went to heaven, he had no doubt but he should be one. Now, he is really an eminent saint in Christ: he confesses himself the *chief* of sinners. Why so? Did he love sin, lie down and wallow in sin, and glory in sin? No, far from it: he was now saved from all his sins. Hence he sees the exceeding preciousness of Christ, his Saviour; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which dwelt in him; and the infinite holiness, spirituality, and perfection of the law of God. Therefore, he makes this public declaration: not, I have been, but, I *now* am the *chief* of sinners. He, as it were, stands forth and challenges the whole race of sinners, and says, I will give place to no one: of all of you, I will be the first rate, and stand foremost in the rank. But is not this glorying in sin, which was his shame? Self-righteous hearts think so: they cannot understand it. When any sinner adopts St. Paul's language, and says, "of sinners I am chief," they ignorantly reply, there can be but one chief. Who then is that one? Why every one, who drinks into the same spirit with the apostle, has the same views of himself which he had. For, (1st.) They see sin, not only in its fruits, but as a root: not only in its actions, but as a nature, in which dwells no good thing. Such feel in their nature the vile lusts of the beast, and the cursed tempers of Satan. Though sin has not the dominion over them, yet sin dwells in them. When they look at their past sinful conduct, they take into view their present sinful nature also, and therefore rate themselves

according to their views of themselves. They have done with self-admiration and self-justification. I AM the chief of sinners. I see myself. I think, no one has so wicked a heart, and so bad a nature as I have. (2d.) Such from their hearts give glory to the holy, blessed Trinity. O, how is God the Father glorified for his everlasting love to such sinners! how is God the Son's grace exalted, in dying to save them, living to fulfil the law for them! how is the Holy Spirit's operations magnified, in convincing them of sin; bringing them to Christ, to be saved from sin; and sanctifying them, by the faith of Christ, over the power of sin! (3d.) Such, all such, and none but such, do cordially embrace and comfortably live upon this faithful saying, which is worthy of all acceptation, (with the deepest humility, and the most inflamed joy) "That Christ came into the world to *save sinners*." Therefore, as they are not under the power of sin, so they are delivered from the pride of their own righteousness. A sinner's righteousness! They are now ashamed, that they should ever be so arrogant and ignorant as to talk of it, trust in it, or expect to be justified by it, either in whole or in part.

Transgressors of the deepest stain,
In Christ salvation find,
His blood removes the foulest guilt,
His Spirit heals the mind.

JULY 18.

Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things, proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.
Psa. 31:18.

The language of natural reason is, If I am righteous, God will love me: the language of faith is, Though I am a sinner, yet God loves me; and, because he loves me, therefore he makes me righteous. How? The pen of inspiration answers: David, describing the character of a sinner, renewed by grace, and made meet to dwell with God, saith, "He shall receive *righteousness* from the God of his salvation." (Psa. 24:5.) Here we see plainly, that righteousness is a gift; that it is received, not worked out by the sinner; that it is given by the God of our salvation. It is the glorious robe, our elder brother, Jesus, wrought out for us; our heavenly Father imputes to us, and puts upon us. God the Holy Spirit enables us, by faith, to receive it, rejoice in it, and boast of it. For, we see ourselves made infinitely and everlastingly righteous in it. Here observe, the gift of righteousness, to make destitute sinners righteous, is an Old Testament doctrine. Lord, establish our hearts in this fundamental truth of thy blessed word. Jesus, Master, enable us to take comfort in thy one righteousness, and to give thee the glory of this inestimable blessing.

Is it so, that thou art thus righteous in God's sight? Then, thou hast righteous hopes, righteous fears, righteous joys, a righteous heart, and a holy life: yea, and proud, contemptuous foes too. Their lying lips will be opened against thee. The adversary of all truth will bring lying accusations

against the truth thou believest, as sure as he brought them against Jesus Christ *the righteous*, who is the TRUTH. Stirred up by him, marvel not if men charge thee with being an Antinomian, an enemy to all righteousness—that they say *grievous things* of thee—speak proudly against thy faith—*contemptuously* sneer at thy confidence—saying, how absurd the notion, that thou, who art a miserable sinner in thyself, should yet be perfectly righteous in Christ! And, in opposition to Christ's glorious righteousness, they will set up the sinner's filthy rags, and assert that we are to be justified first or last, or somehow, by what we do. What is thy duty here? Imitate David. Give thyself unto prayer. "Let the lying lips be put to silence." How? By the grace of Jesus teaching thee to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. So is the will of God, that with *well-doing* ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1 Pet. 2:15.) "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3.

JULY 19.

Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Acts 2:40.

Some, from a warm zeal for free-will, and a strong opposition to salvation by grace, have been weak enough to cite this passage to prove, that we have a hand in our own salvation; because we are here called upon to save ourselves. They might with equal propriety have inferred, that we are here exhorted to new create ourselves. But there is a sense, in which this exhortation is peculiarly applicable, to every saved sinner, every justified believer in Christ. For the honour and glory of our Saviour, and for the peace and comfort of our souls, let us attend to it. Wisdom informs us, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness. O how filthy are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up." (Prov. 30:12,13.) Now these are at enmity against, "That seed that serve the Lord, and which are counted to him for a generation." (Psalm 22:30.) It was so from the beginning. It is so now. It ever will be so, as long as two seeds or generations are in the earth. Therefore, we are called upon to save ourselves from this generation; for it is untoward. The men of this generation may have extensive imaginations, profound learning, and shining abilities—they may occupy high stations in church and state. Yet they are perverse. They deride the glorious gospel: set at nought the precious Saviour: his perfect atonement, and one righteousness, they see no need of: they ridicule the operations of his Spirit, and call all who pretend to them, enthusiasts. Glad are they, when they can shew the untowardness of their nature, and the vexatious disposition of

their spirits against them. From such, O Christian, save yourself. How? Refrain from their company. Despise their deistical notions. Abhor their proud, free-will, self-righteous tenets. Defile not yourself by reading their works. It is like trying the effects of poison upon a healthy body. Separate from them. Come out from amongst them. So shall you save yourselves, from partaking of their evils and judgments. Know his friends, and associate with them. Bless your precious Lord, for saving you from their untoward state, which was of his unmerited mercy and distinguishing grace. O when you read of them, and see them, reflect, such I was once; who made me to differ? Thus you will get good by them, if the reflection tends to sink your soul in humility, and causes you to exalt the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus.

Dangers beset on ev'ry side
From men profane, and sons of pride:
O keep me, Lord, by grace divine,
And make me know I'm ever thine.

Born from above to walk with thee,
By faith that I may holy be:
Then let it be my constant care,
Of men untoward to beware.

JULY 20.

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom. Prov. 4:7.

In Joseph's visions, the sun, moon, and stars, made obeisance to him, and all the sheaves bowed to his sheaf. (Gen. 37:7.) So wisdom is honoured and exalted above and beyond every thing beside. This wisdom is the Son of God, "to whom every knee shall bow." (Phil. 2:10.) Jesus under the character of wisdom, is said to cry—to utter his voice—behold I will pour out my Spirit into you—and wisdom is said to enter into the heart. (Prov. 1:20-23, and 2:10.) All this can be applied to none other but Christ, who is of God "made unto us *wisdom.*" (1 Cor. 1:30.) He cries after us miserable sinners—he utters his voice of love to us—he pours out his Spirit upon us—he enters into our hearts, and dwells there by faith. This truly is the principal thing. This, infinitely above all others, demands the whole of our attention, labour and diligence. Get what we may, yet without this, we are not wise. We cannot be happy. We shall be only foolish, deluded and miserable. There will always be a vacuum in the heart, and a cry of what lack I yet? *Get wisdom.* What, get an interest in Christ? What can we poor, miserable sinners do to get that? It is a foolish phrase. It is unscriptural advice. Solomon reproveth it when he asks, "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a *fool* to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" (Prov. 17:16.) As though he had said, none but a fool thinks his own works and doings the price of wisdom, and that by these he is to purchase an interest in Christ, and a title to his kingdom. Such have no understanding of the grace of Christ: no real love of

heart to Christ. He invites, "Come without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1.) This is the way to buy and to get wisdom. Seek to enjoy the knowledge of wisdom in Christ—labour after more and more experience of his grace, and fellowship with him in your souls. Be not satisfied, not a day nor an hour without tasting his sweetness, and feeling his preciousness. O Jesus, I am foolish, be thou my wisdom. I am sin, be thou my righteousness. I am poor and miserable, be thou my riches and my consolation. I have many wants to be supplied—many miseries to be relieved—many corruptions to be subdued—many graces to be strengthened—many enemies to be conquered. O may I possess thee in all thy fulness to-night and for ever. This is the principal thing: the one thing needful. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom." Col. 3:16.

Jesus, thou my wisdom art,
Make and keep me wise of heart;
Thee to prize above all things,
Who to me salvation brings.

What are all things here below?
Foolish toys and empty show;
May I live above with thee,
And thy glory daily see.

JULY 21.

Kiss the Son. Psa. 2:12.

A short command. For brevity, like the poesy of a ring: but comprehensive, like the book of God. For it compriseth all that the Scriptures require of us, and promise to us. It means, that we live in holy love, and walk in sweet friendship with the Son of God. For, (1st.) a kiss is a token of reconciliation. Kiss and be friends, is a common proverb. "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful." (Prov. 27:6.) Christ has experienced this, by the kiss of Judas. Though sinners against Christ, yet he loved us: though enemies to him, yet he died for us. The belief of this love destroys our enmity. The breach between God and us is made up. We are reconciled to God, and have peace with him, through Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1.) How did reconciling grace operate upon the heart of that vile sinner, Mary? She kissed her Lord's feet, while, with tears of penitential sorrow, she washed them. (Luke 7:38.) O! give the reconciling Son of God, this love-token of your reconciled hearts. (2d.) A kiss denotes congratulation. When Samuel anointed Saul, he kissed him and said, "Is it not because the LORD has anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" (1 Sam. 10:1.) Thus congratulate Christ, "who is the Captain of our salvation." (Heb. 2:10.) (3d.) It is a salute of joy. By a kiss, we welcome a dear friend, on return from a long journey, or dangerous voyage. What a journey did Christ take! what a voyage did he embark in for us! After all his agonies and sorrows for our salvation, he has arrived at his kingdom and glory: and shall we not welcome and salute him with a kiss of joy? (4th.) It is a token of great honour. Not every one may presume to kiss

the hand of an earthly monarch; some are permitted, on being appointed to some place under his government. Behold, we are "made kings and priests unto God, by Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:6.) What an honour to kiss the King of kings! Lastly; it is a love-token of consanguinity. Loving relatives express their mutual affection by a kiss. Is Christ the loving bridegroom of our souls? Let us arise, shake ourselves from the dust, and stir up our hearts, to give him every possible token of love and affection. May we live nearer to him, enjoy more of him, and be indulged with more spiritual communion with him. May our souls ardently long to be with him, that, with rapture, we may kiss those dear feet that travelled, and were nailed to the cross for us; those blessed hands, which were stretched out in prayer, and nailed to the accursed tree, and bless that loving heart, which was pierced for our sins and salvation.

With sweet affection, let us kiss
The Son of God, our Lord,
And own it as our highest bliss,
To live upon his word.

The more we think upon Christ's love,
While in this vale of tears,
The more our hearts will soar above,
And banish all our fears.

JULY 22.

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. 2 Cor. 6:7.

What sign shewest thou? Shew us a miracle, and we will believe you are inspired, says an evil and adulterous generation. A sign and a miracle! Why, every regenerate soul is both a sign and a wonder to carnal men. They are born from above—They live above—their views, end, and aims are to things above. They study to approve themselves to God, who is above. These words, though peculiarly applicable to the ministers of Christ, yet are true also of every disciple of Christ. He studies to approve himself, (1st.) by the word of truth. What is that? Where is that to be found? God's book, the Bible. O the Bible! Say some weak heads, and deceived hearts, the letter of scripture is not God's word. Find a surer testimony of God, and from God, if you can. We will be content to fix our faith upon this word of truth, for it testifies of our beloved, who is *the truth*. He therefore bids us "search the scriptures;" and we find them lively oracles to our souls. As we find Christ in the word of truth, we live upon him according to the word of truth, and desire to frame our whole conduct by the word of truth. Its doctrines we submit to—its threatenings we fear—its precepts we obey. (2d.) "By the power of God." That accompanies the word of truth to our hearts—causes it to be believed in our hearts—brings joy and peace to our hearts in believing the word—and fills our souls with a hope full of immortality, promised in the word—it is reserved for us, and we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, according to the word. (1 Pet. 1:5.) (3d.)

“By the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left.” What is this? Not a fancied righteousness of our own; that is at best but filthy rags; a wretched armour, either on the right hand or left. None but fools would appear in such an armour. Those who do are the sport of fools, and contempt of devils. Not an inherent righteousness which some talk of. What is within, cannot be an armour for without, on either hand. This righteousness has never fulfilled the law of God, therefore cannot defend from the face of enemies. But the perfect, spotless righteousness of the Son of God has: therefore, that can defend from every assault, and every accusation, from every quarter, on either side. This is the cry of faith—this, the armour of the soul, “that I may be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is having the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Phil. 3:9.) Take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, in one hand, and the shield of faith, the righteousness of the Son of God in the other, and what shall stand against you?

All my trust on Christ is stay'd,
All my help from him I bring,
Cover my defenceless head,
With the shadow of thy wing.

JULY 23.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Rom. 5:9.

All heresies are founded in pride, and spring from ignorance and unbelief of the Lord's word. Some strike at the glory of the free grace of God. Others at the divinity of the Son of God. Others at his atonement and righteousness, whereby our sins are pardoned, our persons justified, and final perseverance to eternal glory is secured to every believer. St. Paul, under the influence of that Spirit, who foresaw every heresy which would spring up, divide the church, dishonour Christ, and distress his members, here sets himself against that pernicious heresy, That souls once justified and pardoned by the blood of Christ, may afterwards perish, under the wrath of God. (1st.) What is meant by being justified by the blood of Christ? Just the reverse of being condemned for sin by the law. For his blood takes away sin, which is the cause of condemnation. Christ's blood shed at his death, was the finishing stroke, and includes his whole work, as our Saviour. He made that full satisfaction to law and justice, for which sinners are freed from condemnation by the one, and pronounced just by the other. They are once for all, and for ever, justified in God's sight. For though God sees sin in them, yet they are for ever justified from it, in his beloved Son. (2d.) Who are thus justified? Sinners, who believe on the Son of God, whether they have the sense and comfort of it in their own consciences or not: for they now receive the atonement of Christ into their hearts by faith. Faith urges them to plead, and not rest satisfied, till they find the peace of God in their

consciences, flowing from justification in Christ's blood. But, (3d.) May not such perish at last under the wrath of God? No, says St. Paul, that is impossible. *Much more*, mind those precious words, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved,"—as though he had said, what! did the Son of God shed his blood in vain? Has he called us, and justified us before God, through faith in his blood? And has he now no love for us, nor care for us? Will he, after all this grace, leave us to perish under wrath? No. As we are actually justified by his blood, we shall be eternally saved from wrath through him. His precious blood can never lose its efficacy: his gracious heart never abate in love: his almighty arm can never lose its power. As Christ died to redeem from all sin: he lives to save from all wrath. This is the faith of God's elect. This faith works by love of the truth, and in rejecting all self-righteous errors: and as the soul is comforted by this love, love inspires to all cheerful obedience.

When Jesus on the cross did bleed,
He represented all his seed;
And they in him were justified,
And this by faith's to them apply'd.

JULY 24.

—*That in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* Col. 1:18.

We cannot be happy, till this truth is brought into the experience of our hearts. The regenerate soul is ever at war with the flesh, for it opposes the pre-eminence of Christ. And is also at war against the proud notions of profane, as well as self-righteous men, who reject Christ our precious head, from having the pre-eminence in the salvation of the body. They put him in subordination in many things, instead of giving him the pre-eminence in *all* things. When our Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," (John 5:17,) some self-sufficient sinners become bold intruders, and add, "Lo we work also, and our works must have some part in our salvation." Well, it will be so, till the law of works, which has the pre-eminence in their hearts, kills their legal hopes and self-righteous confidence. Soul, can you say with St. Paul, "I, through the law, am dead to the law?" (Gal. 2:19.) Are you married to Christ by faith? Then you have seen, that you are totally destroyed in the old creation; and a mere cypher, an insignificant nothing in the work of a new creation. Here Christ is all in all. As a chaste and loving bride, you will glory in, and exalt your beloved Bridegroom above all things. (1st.) You will give him the pre-eminence in your heart. It is said of the late king, George the Second, when he chose to keep his nobles at a distance, he used to say, "the *king* is at home to-day." So, whenever any bold intruders from the world, the flesh, or the devil, solicit admittance, you will say, "King Jesus is on his throne to-day." He has the pre-eminence within. My

affections are set on him. There is no room for you. (2d.) Of your hopes. Does Satan accuse? We overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by our testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 12:11.) Does the law condemn? "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13.) Is conscience distressed? "His blood sprinkles our hearts from an evil conscience." (Heb. 10:22.) His work "makes perfect," as pertaining to the conscience. (Heb. 9:9.) "His blood purges our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." (Heb. 9:14.) Thus Christ has the pre-eminence in all things, pertaining to our conscience, and our hopes. For we are fully assured, "God hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. 1:6.) (3d.) In our lives. We are not under the law. Therefore we have done with all legal striving to fulfil it, that we may be justified by, and saved for what we do. But we are under the grace of Christ. This has the pre-eminence over our walk. We live under the influence of love. We walk with Christ's salvation in our hearts.

JULY 25.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saveth us. Titus 3:5.

"Shew us a miracle, and we will believe you are inspired," say carnal men. We can, but they have no eyes to see it. Blessed be God, miracles are not ceased. The Lord works miracles of grace daily. Every regenerate sinner is a miracle of God the Father's mercy, of God the Son's grace, and of God the Holy Spirit's power. His humble language proclaims it. I stand forth and declare, that I was a vile sinner, condemned by the law of God, and justly deserving the damnation of hell; yet full of the pride of my own works, and confident of salvation by my own righteousness; but God, by an act of sovereign mercy, has saved me from the power of sin, and a vain confident hope of my own righteousness. "Not by works which we have done." Our works are out of the question. For all boasting is excluded. Yet the notion of absolute mercy in God to any sinner, without respect to works of righteousness performed by man, to fulfil the law of God, is absurd and unscriptural. It is to be rejected as contrary to the attributes and perfections of the Godhead. Therefore, we are saved by mercy, according to works of righteousness: but not which we have done. No. But what Jesus our law-fulfilling head hath done for us. He hath fully obeyed the commands of the holy law; perfectly satisfied the demands of strict justice, hence the mercy of the Holy Spirit flows to us. Jesus saves us from the curse of the law, and the sword of justice. The Spirit saves us from the blindness of our understanding, the rebellion of our will, and the carnality of our affections. Pause, O my soul! Fall down

and adore his rich mercy, that snatched thee from hell, and saved thee to heaven. Yes, into the heaven of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit. My soul is formed for it. I have suitable dispositions to it. How? "By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." As water separates the filth from the thing washed, and makes it clean; so the Spirit separates us from the love of sin, our pride, self-righteousness, and aversion to Christ and his salvation; begetting us again from our old natural false hope, to a new and lively hope of salvation, by the death and resurrection of Jesus, by the word through faith; renewing us hereby in the spirit of our mind, making us new creatures in Christ. So that salvation is not by reforming and mending our old nature. That is left just as it was. But begetting us anew in Christ, that we might live and walk in him to the glory of God. Our old nature is subjected to grace. "Christ is in us the hope of glory." Col. 1:27.

No works of ours have any share,
God's mercy to procure:
It's all by grace, we're what we are!
May grace make us more pure.

JULY 26.

This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son JESUS CHRIST, and love one another. 1 John 3:23.

When a weary traveller has lost his way, what pleasure must the sight of a directory afford him? How must his joy be increased, if it informs him he is near a dear friend's house, who will kindly receive him? Weary pilgrim, look at this directory, and rejoice. You are near a dear friend, who will kindly receive, and heartily welcome you. Obey this command, and enjoy the comfort. Consider, (1st.) who commands. God the Father of heaven: that God against whom you have sinned, and by sin art become miserable. He would have you be both holy and happy. You can be neither without believing. Both are enjoyed in faith. (2d.) The command. *Believe*. By the ten commandments thou art condemned: thou art brought in guilty by them. The law ministers nothing but wrath and condemnation. God be merciful to us miserable sinners! God shews mercy. O the love and grace of the law-giver! He here gives us one command, which ministers life and salvation to our guilty souls. Only believe. You mourn under a sense of sin, are dejected for want of peace, and distressed for want of comfort. You look one way and another. You strive to do this and that. You pray, read, hear, communicate, etc.; still your soul is not happy and joyful. Why not? Because you do not obey your Father's command. *Believe*. (3d.) Consider the object of faith. "The name of his Son Jesus Christ." God the Father doth not command, believe on me, come to me, but

only as he is in Christ. Therefore he says, "hear my beloved Son." (Matt. 17:5.) Believe on him; go to him; receive him; look to him; venture your souls on him; constantly and continually exercise your minds on him, for all salvation: so shall you enjoy my peace, my favour, and my love. All centres in the name, JESUS: your sin-bearing, sin-atoning, curse-suffering, law-fulfilling Saviour. *Christ*; anointed, sent and appointed by God the Father, to do and suffer his will; to finish your salvation, and to save and make you happy every moment, in the sense of a Father's reconciled love *in Him*. (4th.) Who are commanded thus to believe? Sinners, lost and perishing sinners, who have no righteousness to justify, no strength to save themselves. This is your character and mine, and will be so all through life: therefore this command is ever to be obeyed by us. Are you in a doubting, fearing, condemned, dark, distressed frame? Your Father's loving command just suits you. Obey him. Believe in his Son, for light, joy, and peace, and they shall spring up in your conscience. Then love shall prevail in your soul to God and to his children. This is the prayer of faith. "Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17:5.

JULY 27.

But ye have not so learned Christ. Eph. 4:20.

Believe, and live as you will. Love, and walk as you please. Will any say, this is fine licentious doctrine? We answer, such do not know, nor consider the power of faith, nor the influence of Christ's love. They are strangers to his teaching. Christians are his scholars. Christ is our one Master. He graciously condescends to teach us. He kindly says, "learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart to instruct you." (Matt. 11:29.) Our grand business is, to sit at his feet. We have no just ideas of the sinfulness of sin, the vileness of our nature, nor the preciousness of his person, but what we learn of him. Christian, what hast thou learned of Christ this day? If thou hast not learned somewhat of the heinous nature of sin, so as to abhor it, and of the preciousness of Christ's person and salvation, so as to cleave to him, verily, thou hast lost a day. Thou didst not so learn Christ. For this is his word daily to thee: "*Come unto me.*"

(1st.) When the pleasures of sin invite, when these trinity of idols, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, seek to be gratified, what is your answer? Is it not: My soul abhors them, my life shall be prevailingly free from them. I have not so learned Christ as to indulge them. I have learned so much of his precious love, as to desire to be wholly, solely, and eternally devoted to his glory. (2d.) Have you been bearing your sins, and carrying your sorrows to-day? Verily you take too much upon you. You have not so learned Christ. Surely, he hath done this for you, that you

should be eased of their burden, and find rest in him. "All ye that are weary and heavy laden, come unto me, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) This is his sweet voice. "Let not your hearts be troubled." This is his precious command, "Believe in me." (John 14:1.) (3d.) Have you been this day folding your hands in dejection, full of doubts and fears, and your hope at the last gasp? You have not so learned Christ. For he saith to the fearful heart, "Be strong: fear not." (Isa. 35:4.) Again, "Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. I will keep thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isa. 41:10.) Daily learn to exalt Christ's words, against all your sorrows: his righteousness against all your sins: his salvation against all your demerits: his promises against all your fears; and his truths against all Satan's lying suggestions. See the blessedness of thus learning Christ. "Great shall be thy peace: in righteousness shalt thou be established; fear and terror shall not come near thee." Isa. 54:13, 14.

JULY 28.

Saul answered, I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me. 1 Sam. 28:15.

A more awful speech is scarce to be found in the Bible. A more dreadful state a soul cannot be in, on this side of hell. To have potent enemies in battle array: to have the guilt of abominable sins staring one in the face: and to be sensible that the Lord is departed from one, how horrid to think of! O come here, and see the terrible effects of trifling with God, and disobeying his commands! For we read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul—that God gave him another heart—that he was turned into another man—and that he prophesied. (1 Sam. 10:6.) And yet, such was his dreadful conduct, as to bring upon himself such sore distress. How does he act under it? Does he humble himself, as heretofore before the Lord? No. But he adds this evil to all his abominations. He seeks to the witch of Endor: desires her to raise up Samuel to him. The form of Samuel appears, and tells him of his sudden destruction by the Philistines. Learn hence, (1st.) That as the Lord's mercies are sure, so also are his judgments. Though he may delay for a season, yet a day of vengeance will surely overtake every impenitent, sin-hardened soul. Though it was long before, that Saul disobeyed the Lord's command, in not totally destroying his enemies, the Amalekites; yet the Lord had neither forgotten it, nor forgiven him. (2d.) See how a sin-hardened soul acts. Not like David, who comes to the Lord with an humble heart, a broken spirit, and a sorrowful cry, "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." (Psalm 25:11.) But like Saul, who

applied to the devil for relief. (3d.) We do not hear one word from Saul, of the cause of his distress, *sin*. His eyes were blinded by it, that he saw not the evil of it: his heart was so hardened by its deceitfulness, that he felt no sorrow in his soul on account of it. For the Lord was departed from him. O that we may dread and deprecate this. But let not any sin-distressed, broken-hearted sinner, write bitter things against himself, from hence. For, if sin causes sorrow of heart, and mourning of soul, and excites a cry, God be merciful to me—save, Lord Jesus, or I perish: the Lord is not departed from that soul: it is not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. O love the Lord for that. Praise him for his grace which keeps you from that: and that his promises still invite and encourage you. “For if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and his blood cleanseth from all sin.” 1 John 1:7—2:1.

With jealous heart and godly fear,
O may I walk before the Lord:
This will prevent the falling tear,
And love, and joy, and peace afford.

May others' evils warn my soul,
The dang'rous paths of sin to flee;
Let gen'rous love my soul control,
In sweet obedience Lord to thee.

JULY 29.

The answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 3:21.

The grand business of faith is, to give being and subsistence to divine truths in the mind. (Heb. 11:1.) Hence conscience obtains relief and peace, and the soul is made happy. Consider, (1st.) What is conscience? Science is knowledge. Pre-science is foreknowledge. Conscience is something joined *with* knowledge. "Some have their conscience defiled." (Tit. 1:15.) With what? The guilt of their sins. Some are said, "to be sprinkled from an evil, or guilty conscience. (Heb. 10:22.) With what? The blood of Christ. Therefore, in respect to a good, or bad conscience, something must be joined with the science or knowledge of the mind to determine it by. In this sense, the word conscience is used in scripture. Hence, (2d.) We may easily see, what is the answer of a good conscience before God. Join the law of God with your science, or knowledge of yourself. What report will conscience make? The law condemns. Conscience pleads guilty. It has evil in it. Hence you fear and tremble. But faith joins with our science, or knowledge, *the resurrection of Christ*. Then we have a good conscience, not troubled with the guilt of sin. For Christ died for our sins. He atoned for them all on the cross. They are all buried in his sepulchre. He rose again for our justification. Hence we are fully discharged from all condemnation for sin. Thus we have a good answer, from a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1st.) This is what St. Paul calls, "The mystery of faith." (1 Tim. 3:9.) It is a mystery, known only by the

experience of the faithful. Carnal reason cannot comprehend it. The judgment of sense rejects it. Natural men think, a good conscience arises from their being good in themselves, and doing no harm. They have a stupid conscience and a deceitful heart. They believe a lie. And such, from a notion of their own righteousness, think they have a good answer therefrom towards God. Such is the ignorance, blindness, and unbelief of nature. This nature is part of us. This flesh, with all its carnal reasonings, and corrupt notions, opposes the mystery of faith, in the conscience. Therefore, (2d.) this mystery is to be held in a pure conscience. The resurrection of Christ is to be held fast, as that truth, by which conscience can maintain peace; the heart be made happy, the life influenced to all holiness, while God justifies us. This is the peculiar glory of faith. Hence, "The God of hope fills us with all joy and peace in believing." (Rom. 15:13.) This is our resurrection blessing.

JULY 30.

I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night. Psalm 119:55.

Consider, (1st.) Hebrew names express the nature of the things to which they are applied. Whatever name the LORD makes himself known by to us, is expressive of his nature, and of his covenant love and grace to us. Hence there is no name so sweet to us sinners, as that which he hath assumed, the name JESUS: The *Lord*, the self-existing Jehovah, Jesus. All the glorious perfections of wisdom, love, and power, shine with the greatest lustre in that name: the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Tit. 2:13.) All the attributes of Jehovah are magnified and glorified in that precious name. (2d.) To remember the name of the Lord, is to meditate in faith, upon what he is to us, hath done for us, and hath promised to bestow upon us, as the Lord our Saviour. O what a wide field for meditation is here! But (3d.) David remembered the Lord in the night. While others were sleeping, or doing worse, he was meditating: in the night, when all nature was in profound silence. This is a blessed season for meditation, upon the Lord of creation, providence, and grace. But by the night may also be understood, (1st.) the night of affliction, pain, and sickness of body. O how sweet, to remember the Lord's name in it: to see the rod of love in the hand of a covenant God and loving Father. Or, (2d.) a night of bereaving; the loss of a near relative, or a dear friend. O blessed to remember, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;" and to remember the Lord, to sanctify the loss, that we may be enabled to say, blessed be the name of the Lord. Or, (3d.) the night of

temptation, when all appears dark and distressing. Then how joyful to remember the name of him who was tempted for us, the love of him who sympathizes with us, the power of him who is able to succour us, and the compassion of him who says his grace is sufficient for us! Or, (4th.) the night of desertion. O this is a black night indeed! but yet, how animating to remember the name of the Lord, who declares, "In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. 54:8.) Lastly, How sweet to remember the name of the Lord against the night of death. Dear Lord, familiarize that solemn night to our souls. Let us meditate on it with composure, and look for it with joy. When we think of its awful solemnity, let us remember thee, who hast swallowed up death in victory—took away its strength and sting—so that in faith, we may joyfully cry out, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15:57.

JULY 31.

Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? John 21:17.

Peter had grieved his Lord by three denials of him. Now his Lord grieves him with three questions, respecting his love to him. We may often read our sin in our punishment. Peter's Lord suffered him to fall, to lower his pride and self-confidence. Now he has caused him to descend to the valley of humiliation, he keeps him there. A little while since, he boasted of his superlative love to Christ, above all the rest of his disciples. "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended—I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death—Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Bold words! who can doubt of the sincerity of Peter's heart in all this? Hence learn, (1st.) The warm frames of young converts, are often attended with great self-confidence. There is much of nature's fire in them. My heart has often rejoiced, and been warmed with love, to hear the ardor and energy, with which some in their first love have spoken of precious Jesus. But I have thought, a sifting time will come. The Lord keep your joyful hearts humble before him. (2d.) See the unchangeable love, and sovereign grace of Christ to his dear disciples. He told Peter of his fall, and warned him against it. Yea, set before him every particular aggravation of it. How blind are those, who see not here the divinity of our Lord? Notwithstanding this, Peter abates nothing of his self-confidence. Must his fall cure him? Not that, but Christ's grace, raised and restored him. Falls into sin, naturally harden through the deceitfulness of sin. Take

heed of looking to saints' falls, to make you think little of your own. Peter's fall was a damnable sin: he deserved hell for it: Christ snatched him as a brand out of the fire. His grace brings good out of the evil of sin. Let us glory of grace, but beware of sin. For (3d.) souls raised by the grace of Christ, are grieved for their base sins and falls. Though the subject between Christ and Peter was *love*, yet it grieves. No threats of hell and damnation wound new-born souls like love. "Lovest thou me?" saith the Lord; look back, soul, to thy past conduct; say, was there warm and generous love to thy Lord in it? O the thought of past unkindness to Christ, grieves the soul before him. As Christ repeats the question, grief is enlarged. (4th.) Never think you are truly raised from your falls, and restored to the love of Christ, if you have not grief of heart for them. Christ's grace melts into love. Love sinks into humility, while it kindles the fire of joy, and excites a godly jealousy.

There's grief in love which none can tell,
At the affecting sight of sin:
But those who know they're sav'd from hell,
And feel Christ's precious love within.

Humble me, Lord, unto the dust,
And make me for my sins asham'd;
Save me from all self-righteous trust,
And every thing that may be blam'd.

AUGUST 1.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed. Rom. 4:16.

Men come to earthly inheritances, either by heirship, gift, or purchase. Each one can tell how he came by his estate, and by what right he holds it. Come, Christian, examine thy heavenly inheritance to-night. See how thou camest possessed of it, and by what means thou dost hold and enjoy it. (1st.) It is thine by purchase. Not that thou didst ever contribute one mite to buy it; but Christ thy elder Brother paid the full price for it. Therefore it is called "the purchased inheritance." (Eph. 1:14.) (2d.) It is thine by gift: "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," (Luke 12:32.) (3d.) It is thine by heirship: thou wast born to inherit it: not by thy natural, but by thy spiritual birth. Now thou art "an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ," thy elder Brother. (Rom. 8:17.) (4th.) How dost thou hold it? By *faith*. Mind this: Faith is not thy title to it. Thou hast that by purchase, heirship, and gift. Faith receives it, takes possession of it, and enjoys the comfort of it. We are receiving a kingdom, (Heb. 12:28.) (5th.) The Spirit is the earnest of this inheritance. He first makes thee an heir, then bears witness to it, by possessing thee of the graces and gifts of the kingdom—and thus trains thee up for the full enjoyment of it in glory. (6th.) It is by faith, "that it might be by grace." Works have not the least hand at all in the matter. They neither procure right, nor give title to it. It is a gift of the free favour of God. Adoption to heirship, and purchase of it, are all of free grace; and faith to enjoy it, is a gift of grace also. Well

then, O soul, does not this inspire thee, to give all the glory to a gracious God? But mind again, lastly. It is by grace, "to this end, that the promise might be sure to all the seed," even the promise of eternal life. The promise is by grace, therefore it is absolute, sure, and certain, else God's truth would fail. If it were suspended but upon the smallest condition of works, (whatever some may say) every soul would forfeit his title to heaven, and fall into hell. But it is "sure to all the seed." For God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began. (Tit. 1:2.) To whom? To Christ: for and in behalf of all his spiritual seed. Therefore in Christ our title is sure. Living upon him by faith, we enjoy both present comfort and full assurance, that we shall live and reign with him in his kingdom of glory. Thus poor sinners' hearts are made happy in faith, joyful in hope, obedient in love, while Father, Son, and Spirit, have all the glory.

"Jesus, my Saviour and my Lord,
'Tis good to trust thy name;
Thy pow'r, thy faithfulness, and love,
Will ever be the same."

The woman's seed, the seed of Christ,
Are heirs, by promise sure;
In sweet experience now they're blest,
And shall be evermore.

AUGUST 2.

For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Heb. 11:27.

What a paradox! "Seeing him who is invisible." Is not this deemed the very height of enthusiasm? I dearly love that word. It signifies, being *in God*. And I love it, in the very sense carnal men use it too, for they mean, one who evidences the zeal and fire of godliness in his soul. Give me that man for my companion, who is cast off by the world, as an enthusiast. Is it any marvel that scriptural, experimental truths, are foolishness to the spiritually blind, and that they can neither endure the persons, nor the language of the children of faith? Consider, (1st.) What did Moses endure? What you and I, and every enlightened soul is called to endure, "the reproach of Christ, and suffering affliction with the people of God." Now this is opposed, by "enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season." So that if you will but enjoy the pleasures of sin with the men of the world, you may escape the reproach of Christ, and avoid suffering affliction from them. Now which is your choice? If Christ be your object, you cannot hesitate one moment: Moses' choice will be yours. Give me Christ—welcome reproach—afflictions I embrace for him. O let me have Christ within me, and his mark upon me. Faith makes all easy: love makes all pleasant: hope makes all joyful. Well, but, how could Moses endure the reproach of Christ, before Christ was born in the flesh? Why, the premised Messiah was the object of his faith, his hope, his love and his joy. As he was of all these heroes of faith, recorded in this chapter, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," is the one only object of every sinner's faith, since the

fall of Adam to this day. Take away Christ, and faith has no existence. But, (2d.) How did Moses endure? Just as you and I must. *Seeing*: this implies a continued act of the mind, constantly fixed upon an object. We cannot be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, abounding in love, and enduring reproach for Christ, unless we are continually "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2.) Though he is invisible to the eye of sense, yet we see him by the eye of faith. See him as our fore-runner entered into heaven for us—after having removed all things out of the way that hindered us—now ever living to pray for us—ever ready to keep us—and waiting to receive us to himself, that where he is there we may be also. O this constant looking makes hopeful, holy, joyful living, and comfortable dying.

Faith gives a sight unto the soul,
To see an unseen Christ,
Which does our sinful pow'rs control,
And make us truly blest.

Bless God for Christ, and Christ for faith,
To see such blessed things:
O take more heed to what God saith,
Which only comfort brings.

AUGUST 3.

Whose names are in the book of life. Phil. 4:3.

How did the apostle know that? Had he seen the book of life, when caught up to the third heavens? No: but he very plainly and evidently saw, the work of God's Spirit upon these persons' souls, by their fruits of faith, and labours of love, to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Hence, he speaks so confidently of them. This furnishes us with these glorious truths. (1st.) That the names of all God's chosen people are registered in *the book of life*, called the *Lamb's book of life*. (Rev. 21:27.) This implies the eternal love of God to them, his choice of them, personal knowledge of each of them, value for them, care over them, and their certain enjoyment of him in heaven and glory. For, "Says the Lord of hosts, they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." (Mal. 3:17.) But may not the name of a believer in Christ be blotted out of this book of life, and he suffered to perish? No; saith the Lamb, I will not blot his name out of the book of life. (Rev. 3:5.) It is his book: they are too dearly beloved, and too dearly bought, to be blotted out. Not all the powers of sin, earth, and hell, can make him a liar. He hath said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:28.) Say, believer, what hadst thou done to deserve thy name to be enrolled in the annals of eternal love? What canst thou do to merit its continuance in the book of life? Methinks thy generous, loving soul recoils at these thoughts. Love did the mighty deed: grace reigns: salvation from first to last is all of free gift to God's glory. (2d.) Those whose names are written in the book

of life, may attain to a comfortable knowledge of it. How? Not by seeing this book: not by any voice, visions, and fresh revelations from heaven. But, says St. Paul of these, "They laboured with me in the gospel." This implies, faith in the Lord Jesus, love to him, delight in him, and in the gospel of his grace. When the gospel is indeed good news to us miserable sinners; when we see the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, shine in it; when it captivates our affections, enlivens our hearts, invigorates our minds, animates our hopes, brings peace to our consciences, and subdues the whole man, to give up all for it, and to live under the influence of it, we may be well assured our names are written in heaven. For the power of God hath effected this upon our hearts, as a consequence of it, and a sure evidence to prove it. Hence, (3d.) you see the genuine effects of God's electing love. "We are chosen from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13.) Without a holy faith in Jesus, a holy life from him, and a holy walk before him, we can enjoy no comfort from electing love. But these are evident tokens of the salvation of God. Phil. 1:28.

AUGUST 4.

And ye are complete in him. Col 2:10.

Holy Paul has but one object in view. He aims to bring all Christians to one point, even to be happy and joyful in one Saviour. As in Christ all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, so his disciples should see, that they are complete in him. O how do we labour and toil, vex and perplex our hearts from day to day, for want of clearly seeing, and simply believing this. Consider, (1st.) The assertion. St. Paul does not here exhort, be ye complete, but affirms, "ye *are* complete." Not, ye shall be complete hereafter, when you have obtained stronger faith, greater love, and done more good works: but, "ye *are* complete" now, at this present moment. Do not think you want any thing in yourselves, to make you complete; but know and rejoice, ye are full, complete and perfect in Christ, your Head. For ye are members of him; and being one in him, all his perfection is yours. This is the glory of faith. Here is the comfort and joy of faith. And thus faith gives glory to Christ, its author and object. It leaves all works behind. It finds all perfection in Christ, and it works by love to all good works: not to get perfection by them, but to glorify Christ, in whom we are already perfect and complete. But (2d.) In what sense are all believers complete in Christ? (1st.) In righteousness. They are perfectly righteous in Christ, therefore they are perfectly accepted, and fully justified by God, in him. (Eph. 1:6.) They never can be more complete in righteousness, than they are IN Christ. (2d.) In the abolishing of sin. They are presented in Christ without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Christ hath by one offering perfected for ever all them

who are sanctified. (Heb. 10:14.) That is, separated by the love of God the Father, from eternity; and separated by God the Spirit, to believe on Christ in time, and to whom Christ is made sanctification. (3d.) In freedom from the guilt of sin, and punishment by the law of God. The work of Christ makes "perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." (Heb. 9:9.) Their hearts are sprinkled from an evil, or guilty conscience. (Heb. 10:22.) There is *now* no [not one, not the least] condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1.) (4th.) In their victory over death. Their victory is complete in Jesus Christ. This is the grateful triumph of faith. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57.) In their assured hope of a glorious immortality, our hope in Christ is perfect and complete. Nothing can be added to it. For we are in Christ, (1st.) Perfectly cleansed from all our sins. (2d.) Restored to perfect righteousness. (3d.) Perfectly reconciled to God. And (4th.) The gate of heaven is open to us. Here is a glorious perfection indeed. This is a perfection worth contending for. O precious Christ! O precious faith!—

The wounded conscience knows its pow'r,
The healing balm to give:
That balm the saddest heart can cheer,
And make the dying live.

AUGUST 5.

Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son. Gal. 4:7.

Why does St. Paul tell believers this, seeing he had in the former verse said, that the Spirit assured their hearts of it? We hence plainly see the necessity of the outward word of reconciliation, as well as the inward testimony of the Spirit: and if the witness of the Spirit within does not accord to the testimony of the word without, we do well to suspect it. Besides, from the working of a legal spirit, the prevailings of unbelief, the raging of corrupt lusts, an undue attention to the things of this life, and the accusations of Satan, children of God are prone to live below their glorious state and inestimable privilege. Hence, our loving heavenly Father has not the joy of our hearts, nor the glory of our lives. We do not always, as commanded, rejoice in Christ, our dear elder Brother. Therefore, St. Paul reminds, "thou art no more a servant." Consider, (1st.) what means he by a servant? (1st.) He is under the law, in bondage to it. He gets no freedom of spirit, nor liberty of soul from it, do what he will. It still says, *Do*: work on: you have not done enough yet. I must have *perfect* obedience from you. You are my bounden servant. (2d.) He works for wages: he expects justification by his works, and salvation for his obedience. (3d.) He is always under fear and terror, of being punished in hell for his faults, and the wrath of God coming upon him for his disobedience. For, (4th.) he sees no higher motive to act by, and work from, than the law of works. He is alive to the law, though he is under the sentence of the curse, and death by it. Tell him of free and full justification unto life, by the work of the Son of

God only, without works; he rejects it as downright Antinomianism. O, believer in Jesus, rejoice that thou art no more such a servant, but a son. (2d.) See the blessedness of this state. (1st.) You are not left to work under the law, to obtain God's favour: for he hath freely adopted you to be his son. You have not received the Spirit of bondage to fear (hell and damnation), but the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, "Abba, Father." (Rom. 8:15.) (2d.) You are a regenerate son. God hath begotten you again, (from the dead hope of the law) to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:3.) What work couldst thou do, to deserve this blessing? Just as much as a devil in hell could, to deserve to be made an angel in heaven. It was of thy Father's abundant mercy. (3d.) Thou art a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26.) A believing son by gospel grace: not a working servant, under legal terror. Live then up to your dignity, upon your Father's love, and elder Brother's grace, above the slavery of sin, the bondage of the law, and the fear of hell. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us!" 1 John 3:1.

AUGUST 6.

And if a son, then an heir of GOD through CHRIST. Col . 4:7.

St. Paul's rational conclusions are enough to put all the sophistry of men and devils, to confusion; and to silence all the unscriptural objections of unbelief. (1st.) If a son of God by adoption and grace; then no more a servant under the law, working to obtain the favour of God, righteousness, justification unto life, and salvation by obedience to the law: or to dread its curse and condemnation, for transgressions against it. This truth will try you, whether you have the disposition of a son of God, or not. If not, you will cry, O this is fine doctrine! It suits my lusts exceedingly well. If I am not made a son *by* my works, nor continued a son *for* my works: seeing I get no good by obeying the law, nor any evil by transgressing it: I will gratify my lusts. This is the real language of carnal nature, not of a regenerate soul. Such plainly evince, that they have not the genuine love of a son of God. *If a son*, then there is the faith, the hope, the love, the joy, the peace of sons; and a complacency and delight in the Father's sovereign will, gracious purposes, covenant mercy, providential dispensations, holy commands, and righteous precepts. The soul has an habitual attention to its Father's voice. "*Behold—hear—believe* in my Son, in whom I delight and am well pleased." (2d.) Then an heir of God. Astonishing expression! What do I read? What I, who am the subject of sin and death, and an heir of hell, yet an heir of God! O, my soul! why art thou not filled with an ecstasy of joy? Help, O help me, thou blessed Spirit! to believe this glorious truth, in all its divine fulness. What! an heir of Jehovah, God the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? an heir to all that God has to bestow, to all the blessings of earth and heaven, in time and eternity? an heir to the Father's everlasting love, the Son's everlasting salvation, and to the Spirit's everlasting consolations, on earth and in glory? Yes: all, *all* are freely given, and divinely secured by covenant grace, precious promises, and solemn oaths of my Elohim. But can it be, that I am an heir of God, who groan under a body of sin and death—am harassed by Satan and my lusts—perplexed in a wicked world? Yes: here, faith is all in all. It receives this truth, and glories in it. Mind, (3d.) "An heir, through Christ." Thy heirship comes through him—is jointly with him—is enjoyed in him. It is all out of nature and sense, above sight and feeling; beyond the sin and misery of nature. It is by faith in Christ. By faith we cry, Abba, Father, I love thy holy law; delight in thy righteous will; rejoice to obey thee, as thy loving child; bless thee, that I am no more a slave to sin, a captive of Satan, and in bondage to the law. O what shall I render to my heavenly Father for his inexpressible love!

AUGUST 7.

And because ye are sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Gal. 4:6.

It is the peculiar glory of gospel grace, that sinners are made sons of God. Here is the joyful knowledge of it, by the Spirit. Here is the precious boldness of children to God, *my Father*. The glory of the whole Trinity is in this verse, Lord help us to consider—the Spirit—his cry—and where he cries. (1st.) The Spirit. Mind, he is called the Spirit of Christ, the Son of God. For he comes to us from Christ, his office is to testify of Christ, to glorify him; for he takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to us. (John 16:14.) He convinces us of sin: our want of righteousness: gives us a right judgment of Christ, and his work for our salvation: leads us to Christ, begets us to a lively hope in him, and becomes to our souls, a spirit of adoption, because we are the sons of God, by faith in Christ. Then, (2d.) He gives us a cry. He becomes a spirit of grace and supplication to us. When a child is born, it soon discovers that it is alive, by its cries. God has no still-born children. As soon as Paul was converted, he prayed to God Jesus. That soul that never prayed to Christ, was never converted by his Spirit. Do you believe in and pray to Christ as over all, blessed for evermore? That is a sure and blessed evidence, that you are converted by the Spirit of Christ. For it is his cry. (3d.) Where doth he put this cry? Where the sense of our misery is: where the graces of faith, hope, love, and all religion centre, "in our hearts." Every one can say, Our Father—Christ have mercy on us, with their lips. But God's elect cry day and night to him, from their hearts. (Luke 18:7.) David says, "Thy

servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee." (2 Sam. 7:27.) The lips will soon give over crying, if there be not a cry in the heart. (4th.) What a precious cry it is! Not an angel, nor archangel in glory, hath such a cry. They cannot cry, Abba, Father. Though God created them, he never regenerated them: Christ never died for them: the Spirit never cries in their hearts, Abba, Father, in the sense which he does in us miserable sinners. "In the midst of all the terrors of the law, the thunderings of sin, the assaults of death, and the roarings of Satan, the Holy Ghost crieth, Abba, Father. This cry surmounteth the horrible cries of the law; sin, death, and the devil; it pierceth the clouds and the heavens, and ascendeth up into the ears of God," saith Luther. Thus when we take hold of Christ by faith, we cry, through him, Abba, Father. O soul, rejoice in the love of Father, Son and Spirit, and walk worthy of the Lord, to all pleasing. Col. 1:10.

The Spirit of his Son he sends,
Into our mournful heart.
Whereby we Abba, Father, cry,
And all our fears depart.

AUGUST 8.

Are changed. 2 Cor. 3:18.

What a blessed and glorious change has passed upon our souls! Lord help us to consider it this night to thy glory, and our comfort, how, by whom, and why are we changed. (1st.) How are we changed? From sinful into sinless creatures? No. Some speak of this change, as if it were a total change of our corrupt nature. Hence, many dear children of God, finding and feeling all the ruins of their fallen nature from day to day, are surely distressed, and conclude that no spiritual change has passed upon their souls. But this change is purely spiritual. It passeth upon the spirit of our minds. These were enmity against God. Now they love God, and delight in the law of God. Our souls, once dead in sin, are now alive to God. We are translated from darkness into light. We see with open face, in the glass of the gospel, the glory of Jesus, in all his offices and precious salvation. Hence our minds are changed into his image. We are united to him, and are one with him. The image of God, lost in the fall, is restored to our souls in Christ. We are in him, as righteous before God as though we had never sinned: as holy and without spot of sin, as though we had never lost our innocence. Such is our glorious change. This is the joy of faith. This is above nature: beyond carnal sense. (2d.) By whom are we changed? By the Lord the Spirit. Being loved of God the Father when dead in sin: being redeemed by God the Son from our sins: God the Spirit changes us from dead sinners, into living saints in Christ. (3d.) To what end? That we should admire ourselves, glory in ourselves, and so trust in ourselves as to expect God's favour

and eternal life, for what we are in ourselves? O no. Though changed into the image of Christ, yet we shall find all the evil of sin in our flesh. Though new creatures in Christ, still the old man, with all his corrupt lusts and carnal affections, is alive in us. This is enough to humble us. But the Spirit changes us, that we should glory in, and glory of Christ. That all our joy and rejoicing should be in the Lamb of God, who hath taken away our sins, for ever saved our souls, and brought us into sweet peace and holy fellowship with God, that we may enjoy him in love, and walk before him in holiness below, and live and reign eternally with him above. These are the great and glorious ends of our being changed. One change more, and we are in glory. We shall all be changed, body and soul, into the image of the heavenly Jesus.

Chang'd in my state, my heart and ways,
By power of the sacred THREE:
My soul adore this Lord of grace,
And walk in love and purity.

Rejoice, another change awaits
Thee, a new-born child of God:
Thou soon shall pass the heav'nly gates,
Free from all sin with glory clad.

AUGUST 9.

I am the LORD, I change not: therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Mal. 3:6.

Religion without feeling is like a dead carcass. Feeling without truth, is only nature warmed by fancy. Those are the only precious feelings which are caused by the word of God. That is a joyful season, when we can say, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." (Psalm 119:162.) Why such exceeding great joy? Because, the word of God testifies of the immutable nature, and unchangeable love, of a covenant God, to poor sinners. I am the Lord, Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit. I change not. There's the believer's security from destruction. In this consists his safety, unto salvation. For alas! we are poor, changeable creatures. Now, our souls are strong in confidence, warm with love, joyful through hope, enlarged in prayer, with Christ in our view, and glory in our eye. Anon, a cloud arises in the horizon of our hearts—unbelief prevails—lust rages—corruptions roar—all nature is in ferment, and the soul in distress. Then, what has it to look to, for hope, and turn to, for comfort? an unchangeable God, who is of one mind: with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (Job 23:13, James 1:17.) A precious "Jesus, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. 13:8.) The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee, is mighty, he will save: he will joy over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing. (Zeph. 3:17.) The different frames and feelings which distress us, do not affect God, nor cause any change in his love to us. A changeable God, must be an unhappy being like ourselves.

But God never changes in his love, purposes and grace to us. For, (1st.) He did not love us, choose us, and set his heart upon us, on account of what he saw in us: but as he viewed us in the Son of his love. We are unrighteous sinners in ourselves. But he sees in Christ an everlasting atonement for our sins, and an everlasting righteousness to justify us: therefore he is ever pleased with us in Christ: ever of one mind concerning us: ever rests in his love to us, and joy over us. No change in us, can ever affect his mind, his love, or his joy. Hence learn, (1st.) Not to live upon your frames and feelings, nor upon any thing you are in yourself. Bless God for lively frames and comfortable feelings, but know, these are not Christ: they do not make you acceptable to God. But (2d.) Look to, and live upon, what you are in Christ. That is your glory. God so views and loves you. Look here, live here, and rejoice. So you will (3d.) be like God, of one mind unto Jesus, live upon him, and walk to the glory of your God and Father in him.

God never changes in his love,
As feeble men do think:
To-day their souls he might approve,
To-morrow let them sink.

AUGUST 10.

The heirs of promise. Heb. 6:17.

Consider, (1st.) An heir of promise, is one who has no just right, or legal title, to an inheritance; but as it is ensured to him, by the promise of the owner: just so the Lord makes sinners, who have no right, or title, to this heavenly inheritance, a free promise that they shall be heirs to it. (2d.) When was this promise made? "Before the world began, God who cannot lie, promised eternal life." (Tit. 1:2.) (3d.) To whom could the promise be made, seeing man was not then created? It was not made *to* man, but *for* man: not for any thing in man: nor does the promise receive any stability, by any thing done by men. It was made in the eternal council and covenant, by God the Father, to his co-equal Son; for and in behalf of all the heirs of God. (4th.) Who are the heirs of promise? God knows every one of them. We know their name: it is *sinner*. In the fulness of time, he makes them manifest, and they have blessed evidence and assurance of their being heirs. For, as the Father gave them to Christ, the Spirit draws them, and they come unto Christ. This is the blessed evidence of heirship. They are refugees. They flee for refuge from the curse of the law, the desert of sin, every hope, and all help in themselves, to lay hold of Jesus, their trustee, to whom the promise was made, in whom it centers, and through whom it shall certainly be fulfilled. But neither their fleeing, nor their faith, makes them heirs; but being heirs in Christ, they are enabled to flee to him, believe in him, and enjoy the comfort of it. (5th.) See then, ye believing heirs how safe your state, how secure your inheritance, "It is

reserved for you." (1 Pet. 1:4.) God, willing more abundantly to *shew* unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. (Heb. 6:17.) O the love of God! O the horrid blasphemy of men! They who say, an heir of promise may be damned, charge the great God with perjury! For, (5th.) The inheritance is not by works. Not for any thing we have done, or can do: not for any grace given us. But being heirs by promise, grace is given us, that we should live and walk, like sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ. As you did nothing to make yourself an heir of promise, and to get a title to eternal life, so you can do nothing to forfeit it. It is impossible for God to lie. He cannot be forsworn. His promise cannot fail. Yet, if you do not live like an heir of God, your faith will grow weak, your comfort low; you will lose sight of your title, and your Father will visit your offence with a rod. Psalm 89:32.

I have no right to be an heir,
Of God's most rich inheritance;
His promise gives to all a share,
Who place in Christ their confidence.

Then Lord I humbly come to thee,
A sinner vile, wretched and poor;
O grant me clearly now to see,
I've entered in by Christ the door.

AUGUST 11.

My son, be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS. 2 Tim. 2:1.

St. Paul had known what it was to be strong in vain confidence and self-righteous hopes: to be strong in rage and persecution against Christ and his people. But his soul had severely smarted for that. Now Christ had taken possession of his heart. He was all in all to him. He thought he could never enough recommend him and his grace to his dear friends. O let us imitate him. (1st.) The grace that is in Christ Jesus. Because of our low, mean, scanty thoughts of his rich grace, we are low in courage against our enemies, and weak in the comforts of our souls. Know, there is much more in this, than many weak Christians suppose, who unscripturally think Christ came into the world, to procure some grace for us, that he puts it into us, as men do seeds in a hot-bed, but leaves us to be faithful to it, and so to secure our own salvation. What kind of grace is this? Not saving grace. If this be all, it would end in our certain destruction. But the grace, or favour, that is in Christ towards us, is nothing less than the everlasting love of God to us: an everlasting atonement for our sins: an everlasting righteousness to justify our persons: an everlasting salvation for our souls: and the everlasting consolations of the Holy Ghost, all promises to us in the everlasting gospel, and enjoyed in faith. Those who diminish aught of this, from the grace of Christ, are open enemies to God's glory in Christ, and to the peace, holiness and comfort of our souls. Ignorance and unbelief are our Lord's enemies and ours. Against these, (2d.) Be strong in this grace. Fortify

your mind: fence yourself round with it: entrench yourself in it. Let your confidence be strong in it, against all opposing enemies. Be bold in faith: strong in hope: confident in the grace of Christ. Rest not in any degree of grace received: but be strong in the fulness of the grace that is in Christ. Are your lusts and corruptions strong? Oppose the Almighty grace of Christ to them. Are your doubts and fears strong? "Be strong in the precious promises which are in Christ Jesus, Yea and Amen to the glory of God." (2 Cor. 1:20.) Are your conflicts, temptations, and distresses strong? Flee for refuge to Jesus, the hope set before you. There is *strong consolation* for you! God, knowing our distress and dejection, through the prevailings of unbelief, has graciously confirmed his counsel and promise (O astonishing!) by his *oath*. Can you, dare you think it possible for God to lie, or be perjured? Then, whatever in nature, sense, and feeling oppose, stagger not at the promise of God, through unbelief; "but be strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom. 4:20.

With strongest love, and sufferings great,
Christ manifests his grace:
Then let's be strong, in Christ complete,
And we shall see his face.

AUGUST 12.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. 1 Tim. 6:12.

Soldiers of an earthly monarch are regularly enlisted to fight under his banner: they wear his livery, and are furnished by him with arms. In a day of battle, they prove their courage and faithfulness. So the Captain of our salvation chooses and enlists his own soldiers. He puts on them a livery, whereby they are known to his enemies. He puts an armour on them, and weapons into their hands. From the moment they enlist under him, they enter the field of battle. There is never any peace with the enemy. The fight is the good fight of faith. The prize is eternal life. The daily word of command is, *fight*. Stand to your arms. Give no quarter to the enemy. Beware of the least truce with them, for the danger is great, the effects will prove awful. It is a *good fight*. It is in a good cause: under a good captain, who gives good encouragement, and has assured us of certain victory over the worst of enemies. Fight this good fight for the glory of him, who, in dying for us, has for ever conquered all who are against us. But they are not all dead yet. Fight on. It is a good fight of *faith*. Dost thou say, I have no faith? Then pull off thy soldier's livery. What hast thou to do in the ranks? But who told thee that thou art destitute of faith? Why, thou hast laid down thy shield, art got into the enemy's camp. He has seduced thee by his deceitful insinuations, and will prevail over thee. No faith! What meanest thou? Instead of fighting against, thou art parleying with the enemy. Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners? Yes, sayest thou, but I have not

the comfort of knowing that he is *my* Saviour! What then? Wilt thou deny thy faith for want of comfort? Desert thy Lord's banner till thou hast obtained assurance of his love? Fight on against thy worst foe, unbelief, and cry to thy best friend, Lord increase my faith. The battle is the Lord's. Thy strength is from him. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart: all ye who hope in the Lord. (Psa. 31:24.) *Lay hold on eternal life.* It is the free gift of God. Lay hold of it by faith. Possess and enjoy it now in the belief of thy heart. Hold it fast in hope. Quit not thy confidence in it. So shall thy heart be warm with love, thy spirit filled with joy, and thine arms made strong to fight, until thou art crowned in eternal glory. Remember, the joy of thy Lord is thy strength. When death the last enemy comes, hold fast thy faith, and thou shalt sing, victory in death.

True, 'tis a fight with many foes,
For us too great and strong;
But Christ hath conquer'd all our woes,
The battle can't be long.

Cheer up, my soul, look to thy Lord
For strength in ev'ry hour;
Vict'ry is promis'd in his word
And he will give thee pow'r.

AUGUST 13.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Tim. 3:5.

St. Paul says, "The gospel is the *power* of God." (Rom. 1:16,) and, "Christ is the *power* of God;" (1 Cor. 1:24.) and, "that our faith standeth in the *power* of God." (1 Cor. 2:5.) Hence it is plain, that godliness is of a powerful nature upon the soul. It consists not in form and shadow, not in notion and speculation, but in the real enjoyment of Christ in the heart, and in an experimental knowledge of the grace of the gospel, through faith. It is the grand concern of every living and lively member of Christ, to enjoy more of the light, life, liberty, and power of Christ and his gospel. While those who have only the form of godliness, are content in their heads—are clear in the notion of divine truths—if they can but see a harmony and consistency in the plan of salvation—give good account of the doctrines of grace—talk fluently about them, and contend earnestly for them. There is a species of the Gnostics among us at this day. They place all religion in head-knowledge, while they are careless about real heart experience. Such are visible and manifest by their life and walk. They talk high, and live low: they soar aloft in notion, but live and walk low in carnal gratifications, earthly pleasures, and sensual delights. Still, the form of godliness exists in their heads, but their hearts are void of the power of the Spirit, and the warm influences of the love of God and the grace of Christ. They deny all this: if not in tongue, yet in life and action. What does the apostle advise concerning such? To aim to convince them, and strive to convert their hearts to the power of the

truth? No: they are so fortified with head-knowledge, that you cannot reach their hearts. It would be but lost labour to attempt it. Therefore, from such *turn away*. Leave them. You can do them no good. They may do you much harm. (1st.) In catching their spirit and temper. It is contagious. We may say of such, as Solomon says of the furious man, "make no friendship with him; with him thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." (Prov. 22:24, 25.) (2d.) Such professors greatly damp and abate the zeal of faith, the joy of hope, and the comfort of love, which are enjoyed in communion and fellowship with God, and his Son Jesus Christ. As they have no heart to it, nor relish for it, their conversation will not savour of it. So that you will get no help forward, but rather be driven backward. (3d.) You will be in danger of believing that false position, that you can enjoy God and the world; have fellowship with both in your hearts, while a set of notions only exist in your head. And, lastly, you will learn many specious, but carnal reasons, for throwing off all self-denial, and indulging a light, trifling, worldly spirit.

AUGUST 14.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. John 3:6.

To learn the total corruption and desperate wickedness of human nature, is a hard lesson to flesh and blood. To have no confidence in the flesh; to consider ourselves upon a level with the very worst and vilest of sinners; yea, with the very devils, in point of hope of salvation in ourselves, is mortifying to our natural pride, and contrary to our carnal reason. "But the Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." (Isa. 23:9.) He hath effectually done this, by appearing in our nature, and by the doctrines which he taught. All flesh has become so totally corrupt and abominable in the sight of God, so hopeless and helpless, that nothing but the coming of the Son of God could bring salvation to us. He became the Son of man, that he might seek and save them that are lost. He seeks us, before we seek him. He saves us, before we look for salvation from him. He comes to us, by his word and Spirit, and says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."—The flesh profiteth nothing to salvation.—They that are in the flesh cannot please God.—There is no good thing in the flesh: therefore, no good thing can proceed from it. No man, unless born again out of corrupt nature; born again of the Spirit, can see the kingdom of God. O soul! consider, in order to raise love and gratitude, (1st.) That salvation is a work quite out of nature: that the flesh has not the least hand in it, nor contributes the least mite towards it: nay, it is totally averse to salvation by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God. (2d.) That the Son of God

did not come into the world to purchase grace, and put it into the hands of nature, to make our flesh holy, righteous, and good, (as some foolishly talk) that so we might be saved. But he saves us out of nature. He gives us a new birth, into himself, by his Spirit. He leaves the flesh as he found it, vile and sinful, no good thing in it, that it might be mortified by the Spirit: yea, crucified, as accursed and devoted to death and destruction, because of the sin which dwelleth in it. (3d.) Art thou born again of the Spirit, so as to believe in Christ for salvation? Beware of having the least confidence in the flesh; aim not to make any shew in the flesh: this ministers to the pride and righteousness of the flesh. Know thy flesh, with its corruptions and lusts, as an enemy to thy Saviour, and to the peace and holiness of thy soul. Treat it as such: keep it low daily. Lastly, See all thy righteousness and perfection in the Son of God. Glory only in him and of him. Look on thyself, though ever so vile, yet shining more gloriously in the sight of God, in the glorious robe, and glittering garments of him who is "the Lord our righteousness."

AUGUST 15.

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I; let him do to me as it seemeth good unto him. 2 Sam. 15:26.

Here is majesty in distress: a kingdom in confusion: and the king's royal heart struck with a panic. Every circumstance concurs to heighten poor David's sorrow. His own son had stolen away the heart of his subjects—raised a most unnatural rebellion against his royal father, and caused him to flee from his city. Very excellently, says one, "Let a child of God be but two or three years without an affliction, and he is almost good for nothing. He cannot pray, nor meditate, nor discourse at that rate he was wont to do. But when a new affliction comes, he finds his tongue: he comes to his knees with fervency, and lives at another rate." Perhaps David was never more weaned from self-confidence, nor did his faith ever run higher, nor was his soul bowed lower, nor did he ever breathe with more humble submission to divine sovereignty, than at this time. O, how does his grace shine in this speech! As though he had said to Zadock, the Priest, "Return with the ark: I hope I shall have the Lord's real presence with me, though I have not the symbol of it. I see myself in his hands. I firmly believe God's everlasting love to me. He is my Saviour and my salvation. I know my immortal soul is safe. How he will direct the event of this dark providence, I know not. If it appears that the Lord has no delight in me, as the king of his people; if he suffers my crown and kingdom to be taken from me, his will be done. He has a sovereign right to pull down one, and set up another.

By him kings reign: by his will they are disposed. Behold, here am I: let him do unto me as it seemeth good unto him. Love makes all things work together for good." O, Christian! dost thou not admire his faith in his God, his resignation to his divine will, his submission to sovereign purposes, and his unreserved acquiescence with the counsel of the Lord? Let that man blush, who would dare impeach the character, or speak of the faith of David in a diminutive sense, as though it were weak in the power and goodness of the Lord, not to be compared with the faith of a Christian. O for more of the grace of faith, to follow the bright example of this Old Testament saint! Though his own beloved son, though his own dear subjects were against him; though driven from his palace, yet the presence of his God and the power of his Spirit were with him. Well might David say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." (Psa. 119:71.) Ever remember, O soul, whatever thy afflictions may be, whoever may be against thee, to heighten them, and aggravate thy sorrows, yet the Lord hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

May we possess that humble frame,
Which casts the soul of God;
And trusts and waits upon his name,
Tho' chasened by his rod.

AUGUST 16.

Thus saith thy LORD, the LORD, and thy GOD who pleadeth the cause of his people, etc. Isa. 51:22.

Thou poor soul, who art almost at thy wits' end, drunk with trouble, and intoxicated with affliction, over thee do men insult, and Satan triumph? Are they saying to thee, "Bow down, thou poor, insignificant wretch! that we may go over thee." You a Christian! you are not what you profess. In the lowliness of thy mind, and in the meekness of thy heart, dost thou take all this? And, as it were, hast thou laid thy body on the ground, and suffered thyself to be walked over? All this cannot satisfy the fury of thine enemies. Wherein art thou to take comfort under all this? Verily, from, *thus saith thy Lord. Thy Lord*: mind that. However men treat thee, they cannot take *thy Lord*, nor his love from thee: nor should they at any time disturb thy peace, or destroy thy comfort in him. For the Lord Is *thy God*. *Thy* is again repeated. Why? that thou shouldest take special notice of it; be doubly confident in it. O the sweetness of these pronouns, *My* and *Thy!* The preciousness of the gospel (says Luther) consists in them. "Who pleaded the cause of his people." Who doth this but Jesus? Then he is *thy Lord*: the Lord and *thy God*. Canst thou desire a better? Wouldst thou look to any other pleader? This righteous Advocate has fully undertaken thy cause, without fee or reward. Yea, such is his amazing love for thee, such his astonishing readiness to serve thee, that unsought, unasked, he voluntarily undertook to plead thy desperate cause. Thou art not asked to put into his hands. But thou art content, and happy to see it there, Canst thou help loving and thanking

such a dear Advocate, such a blessed Mediator? This precious pleader hath two points to carry for us. (1st.) To acquit us from every charge of the law, every condemnation of justice, and all the fury of divine wrath due to our sins: (2d.) To obtain for us the comforting, renewing, sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. For this, he pleads the perfect atonement of his death, and the spotless obedience of his life. O! let what he ever pleads before the throne, be the constant objects of our faith: so shall we triumph over all the powers of darkness—the evil of sin—the curse of the law, and even sing victory in distress. Mind this precious word, and rejoice. “The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.” (Ps. 149:4) Then do you take pleasure in the Lord, and glory in his salvation.

I shall prevail, for Jesus pleads
My cause against my foes:
My soul on death and danger treads,
Quite safe from all their woes.

The faith of this makes me rejoice,
To walk the ways of God:
'Tis sweet to hear his loving voice
All thro' the heav'nly road.

AUGUST 17.

And he said unto them, why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Luke 24:38.

Help, O help us, thou dear Lord, who spake these words to thy affrighted disciples, to gather some sweet consolation from them to our hearts this night. We know thou prayest for us, when thou prayest for all who should believe on thee. (John 17:20.) O speak in life and power these words to our troubled hearts, and for the rising thoughts of distress. Thine is the power: thine shall be the glory. (1st.) We here see, though their dear Lord was present, yet his beloved disciples were troubled. Yea, and though he had but that moment pronounced *peace unto you*, yet fears again rose in their hearts. They were as we are, flesh, as well as spirit: men of like passions with us. The frights, fears and troubles which nature is subject to, discompose the spiritual frames of disciples. But, (2d.) They do not alter our state, nor separate us from the love of Christ. This is a cordial under all heart troubles, and the rising of all evil, blasphemous, filthy or horrid thoughts. For, (3d.) Christ is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He sympathizes with us in what is distressing to us. He asks, why are ye troubled? Why do ye give way to unreasonable fears and terrors, which distract and distress your minds? (4th.) He takes pains to remove them. Says he, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is myself:" no other than your dear and loving Saviour. O the condescending grace of Christ! He manifests himself to us. A sight of a risen Christ by faith, expels troubles and fears from our hearts. Therefore, (5th.) Whatever troubles, fears,

dejections, terrors, or distress, arise in our hearts, we are encouraged with all freedom of soul, and boldness of hope, to go to him. Now, to the shame of our hearts, and the sorrow of our souls, have not you and I acted contrary to this? Instead of simply going to Christ with our heart troubles, and soul distresses, have we not questioned Christ's love to us, and care for us? Thus Satan gets an advantage over us: our Saviour gets no glory from us. O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe, that Jesus died for our sins, rose again for our justification, and that he is able to save unto the uttermost—ALL them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25.) Up then with faith, and down with fears: away with all thoughts that trouble our hearts. Look from within: look up. Jesus is before the throne *for* us. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me." Ps. 94:19, 138:7.

My troubles, Lord, are known to thee,
Thou hast a loving heart,
To feel with tender sympathy,
And bid them all depart.

While I pass through this vale of tears,
How oft my spirit sinks,
Daily beset with doubts and fears;
But Jesus of me thinks.

AUGUST 18.

But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 1 Sam. 20:39.

Had any one asked this lad, what Jonathan was doing in the field? he would doubtless have replied, only shooting arrows for his amusement, and I ran and brought them to him. But, O! there was a much greater matter here: no less than the precious life of David was at stake. Love directed these arrows: the voice of love proclaimed by them, David's danger, or his safety. The fatal word, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?* reminds David of his danger, and warns him to flee for his life. Observe, (1st.) Never did more generous, faithful love dwell in a mere human breast, than in Jonathan's to David. But it diminishes, like the light of the stars when the sun appears, compared to that infinitely greater, and more intense love, which dwells in the heart of our spiritual Jonathan, *i.e.*, the gift of the Lord: this Jesus is to all his Davids, *i.e.*, beloved ones. (2d.) There was a secret between Jonathan and David, on which his life depended. So there is between Jesus and us, on which the life of our immortal souls depend. "The secret of the Lord is with them who fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." (Psa. 25:14.) His covenant love and grace, and the perpetuity of them. That he has loved us with an everlasting love, and that his grace shall never forsake us, but shall bring us safe to glory. Therefore, our souls are safe; our salvation is sure. The Lord forbids our fears: "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day." (Psa. 91:5.) Neither sin, death, or hell, shall ever prevail over thee. (3d.) The arrows were either behind, beside, or

beyond the *lad*. Just so are these declarations of God's everlasting love to *lads* in religion: they do not receive them in faith. (4th.) As the lad picked up the arrows, but knew not the matter: so do they pick up words, but understand not the secret of the Lord in them. Their words betray it. For they say, "If there is such a covenant; if God loves me with an everlasting love; if Christ has finished salvation for me; if all is of grace, without any condition of works—then no matter how I live; I will take my full swing in sin and wickedness." Such *lads* are not in the secret; they are strangers to the power of covenant love and faithfulness; their hearts are in bondage to the law; they know not the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free. It lies between the gift of the Lord, and his Davids, or beloved ones, only. Now, if you are a man of understanding in the love of the Lord, You will glory in it: study the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Eph. 3:18, 19.

AUGUST 19.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. 2 Tim. 4:22.

A most precious benediction! How blind are all who deny the divinity of Christ! how miserable are all who live without the presence of Christ! how ignorant are all who know not that such a blessing is to be enjoyed! how stupid are all those who seek it not! Art thou not, O Christian, too negligent in not more earnestly seeking and constantly praying for more of the presence of thy Lord? Consider, what is implied in this wish? It is heaven in the heart, glory in the soul, to have Christ with our spirits. It disposes and qualifies the soul for heavenly glory. For, (1st.) Christ's presence restrains our bad tempers, and subdues our unruly passions. Boisterous waves are changed into a profound calm; rough winds are at peace; foaming billows are still: there is the calm sunshine of heart-felt joy within: all is serene and happy without. Christ's presence causes haughty pride and furious anger to subside. (2d.) It fills the soul with love: love to God and man. We cannot enjoy the presence of Jesus, without loving him as our Lord. It is love that causes him to be present with our spirits, and our spirits catch the flame of love from him; and, if we love God, this love will diffuse itself to our brethren also. (3d.) Christ's presence counsels and directs us in all our difficulties. We are often in the dark, both as to providence and grace; in things temporal and spiritual, as to our bodies and souls. But the presence of the Lord causes light; solves every difficulty; and makes our way plain before our eyes. (4th.) It enables us to bear up under all our distresses. Christ's presence comforts our hearts, while afflictions bow down our spirits. (5th.)

Christ's presence fortifies us with strength, to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil. We can do all things through Christ strengthening us. It is out of his fulness we receive grace for our every need. (6th.) The presence of Christ animates us in the discharge of every duty, and enlivens the exercise of every grace, of faith, hope, love, patience, etc. Lastly, Christ's presence makes sin hateful, our souls humble, the world contemptible, temptations tolerable, self-denial easy, the cross glorious, Satan flee from us, hell vanquished, death conquered, the passage to glory delightful, and heaven most earnestly longed for; that, without interruption, we may be ever present with the Lord. O! use every means to enjoy the Lord's presence. Avoid all things which may cause him to withdraw it. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Eph. 4:30.

Our spirits with thy presence bless,
Thou Lord of all our joy,
That we may walk in righteousness,
And nought our peace destroy.

To know thy love, and feel thy peace,
Creates our heav'n below;
To pray for this we will not cease,
While on to heav'n we go.

AUGUST 20.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Jude 3.

When St. Paul was preaching the most important truths of the everlasting gospel at Corinth, he was brought before the judgment seat, and accused for his doctrine. Poor Gallio would not concern himself about the matter. He considered it all as a strife of words, and a contention about names. I will be no judge, says he. He cared for none of these things. His heart was totally unacquainted with the faith of God's saints. But art thou a partaker of like precious faith with the Apostles? and canst thou be a Gallio too? Know, if thou wilt not contend for the faith, hell and earth are in arms, to contend against. What is the faith here spoken of? (1st.) The doctrines of faith revealed in the word: the whole scheme of evangelical truths, inspired by the Spirit of God. These are received by faith: are the rule, the warrant, the support, and the glory and joy of faith. Such as the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity—their everlasting covenant of grace the result of everlasting love to the elect—the incarnation of the Son of God to save us—our regeneration by the Spirit, full and complete salvation by grace, etc. (2d.) The object of faith. Christ received into the heart, by whom we have peace with God, pardon of sin from him, justification before him, boldness to draw nigh to him, and sweet fellowship with him. Now these truths are delivered to, and received by saints. Says Jude, "Beloved, it was needful that I should exhort you"—to what? Namely, for the sake of peace and quietness, not to dispute and contend for this faith? No, but to *contend*

earnestly: heartily, with warmth of zeal, with a holy glow of affection, in good earnest. Disciple, improve this word of exhortation. (1st.) Consider, the doctrines of the gospel, and the faith of them, are of the greatest moment, both to your being and well-being as a Christian. Says Luther, "One little point of doctrine, is worth more than heaven and earth." Some ignorantly call the doctrines of the gospel mere opinions; just as if it was indifferent, whether believed or not. (2d.) Stand reprov'd, ye lukewarm, Laodicean spirits, who have not a word to say in defence of your most holy faith, but under a pretence for peace, are cool and indifferent about truth. Truth is too great a price, to purchase peace at. But, (3d.) remember faith works by love. Carry the fire of love into all your contentions. Eye Christ in all. Aim at his glory by all. Pray to have his mind accompany all. With love and pity to all, pray him to bless all you contend with, if peradventure he may give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth. Tit. 1:1.

AUGUST 21.

For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. Isa. 54:6.

This was literally fulfilled, when Christ's church was first gathered to him in the days of his flesh. Scarcely were the disciples called and married to Christ, the loving Bridegroom, by faith, but he was taken away from them by a sudden and violent death. They were then like a woman, bereaved of her affectionate husband, who mourned and grieved for her great and affecting loss. They were then as a wife of youth, just married, and soon became as widows, whom the world refused and rejected. But here lay all their comfort of faith, and joy of hope,—the Lord had called them, and he would never forsake them. Though death's relentless arm snatched Christ from them, yet his power could not hold him. By his own omnipotent power, Jesus raised himself; and because of his everlasting love to them, he appeared again unto them. And now they are all gathered home to the full enjoyment of their heavenly Bridegroom, never, never more to part from him. Disciple, how did the Lord call thee? Wast thou not as a woman forsaken by thy husband, and grieved in spirit? Was not the law, the wife of thy youth? Didst not thou live, and comfort thyself, in its embraces? When the Lord called thee, did not thy legal hopes, and legal comforts forsake thee, when you found your husband speak sharp to you, and look stern upon you, were not you grieved in spirit? Were you not disconsolate, at your wit's end? Didst thou not cry out, O wretch that I am! Did not terror beset thee, and an horrible

dread overwhelm thee? When all hope and help failed, and despair of living by thy first husband came upon thee? O the love of Christ: then, then, he openly and comfortably espoused thee to himself, in the sweet bands of faith. He became thine in sensible enjoyment; and thou becamest his before all the world. What if thou art rejected, and refused, of the world? What if thou art vileness and deformity in thine own eyes? Yet the Lord loves thee; he chose thee: he has put his rich robe of righteousness, his glorious garments of salvation upon thee. Now thou art precious in his sight; lovely in his eyes; he has put his Holy Spirit within thee. He says of thee, "Thou art all fair my love, there is *no* spot in thee." (Song 4:7.) "There is no condemnation against thee." (Rom. 8:1.) "There is no separation from my love." (verse 39.) Be a chaste virgin to thy heavenly Bridegroom. Write it upon the table of thy heart, "My God is my salvation and my glory, the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God." Ps. 62:7.

Ye happy souls, married by faith
To the dear Lamb of God,
Daily attend to what he saith;
Fear not his chast'ning rod.

AUGUST 22.

Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? John 20:15.

Profession of Christ, without affection to him, leaves the heart in dead formality. What is religion without the affections? What the highest pretension, the greatest depth of knowledge, without love to our dear Saviour? Here poor Mary discovers her affection to her Lord, by weeping for, and seeking after his crucified body. The fire of love in the heart carries out the soul beyond itself. Tell me, Sir, says she to Jesus (supposing him to be the gardener) where thou hast laid him, and *I will take him away*. Poor weak being, her affections went beyond her strength. But to her inexpressible joy and comfort, Jesus manifested himself to her. This was written for our instruction. Come ye weeping, seeking souls, learn a lesson of encouragement and comfort to-night, from your sister's conduct, and your Lord's dealings with her. Observe, (1st.) Christ's beloved disciples have their weeping and their seeking seasons. They weep, because they love Christ: they seek him, because they cannot be happy without him. So the church, "I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not." (Song 3:1.) Still she goes on seeking. Seeking Christ is an evidence of, and discovers love to him. Seeking him sorrowing and weeping, shews the ardency of affection. Poor distressed sinner, who seest thy want of Christ, knowest thy all is in him, and canst not be happy without him, know this is from a dart of love. Christ hath wounded, and ravished thy heart, with his love. What doth he say to thee? "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse." (Song 4:9.) O there is a mutual affection

between Christ's heart and thine. (2d.) Jesus was near to Mary, though she knew him not. He is near to every weeping, seeking soul, though they have not the comfort of it. (3d.) He discovers his affection by his questions: "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Our fears are seen: our sorrows are felt by our sympathizing Lord: our most silent sighs enter into his ears, and pierce his heart: but he will know the cause of our sorrows from our own lips. Then pour out your hearts before him, tell him of your complaints. Do this in the assurance of faith, that he will manifest himself to you. For, (4th.) He did so to Mary. He called her by her name, *Mary*, which signifies exalted. She was exalted to know Christ's voice, to taste his love, to be his sister and his spouse, to be married to Christ, and to live in sweet union to him, and communion with him. O soul, see whence your seeking, sorrowing frames spring! See the blessed end in which they terminate. O bless Jesus for a heart to seek him. Bless him, though you seek him sorrowing. Thy Lord hath assured thee, "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth." Luke 11:10.

AUGUST 23.

They crucified him. Matt. 27:35.

A short sentence, replete with the greatest importance to a world of sinners: each word in it contains matter of sorrow, wonder, and joy. Here is a fund for meditation. O Christian, time can never explore its depths. It will be the glory of eternity to sing of, wonder, and adore a once crucified Jesus. Let us consider the agents—the work—and the subject. (1st.) The agents—*they*. Who? Angels? No: they gaze and wonder at the cruel, awful deed; but share not in it. Devils? No: they instigate to it; they shout and applaud the deed, but effect it not. No, the work is done by beings, little lower than the angels; yet not devils, but men. Men of devilish natures, cursed passions, and wicked hands. With these they seize the innocent victim, doomed to direful agonies, and an ignominious death. (2d.) The work. They *crucified*. O the bloody deed! Heaven that hour let fall a tear. There hangs—who? A man like us? Yes, but immaculate, innocent. Yea, more, the Son of God. God and man in one Christ. The Lord of life and glory hung a spectacle to men and angels: nailed his innocent hands and tender feet to the transverse wood, to bleed and groan, and die. Say, why? Consider, (3d.) The subject, HIM: Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour. As God, he loved sinners from all eternity. As man, he was born to make sinners righteous by his life, and to take away their sins by his death. The work is done. On the cross he finished it. What are the effects?

Seest thou, O sinner, where hangs all our hope?
Touch'ed by the cross we live.

Ever view then, O soul, the sovereign cure of death, the eternal source of life. God and man in one Christ, on the accursed tree, to make thee blessed and happy. Such is the love of thy Saviour. Such is his salvation. Where is your faith? O look, and look, and look again, till your whole soul loves him. Is sin your grief, and pain, and burden? O the load of pain and grief which Jesus bore! The iniquities of *us* all. He has taken them ALL away by his ONE sacrifice. Remember this. Plead this before the Lord. The faith of this brings hope to the most desperate and vile. The best of saints have no other. With this faith and this hope thou mayest draw nigh to God, plead boldly before justice itself—challenge the law to lay aught to thy charge—face death—resist and repel Satan with thy dying Saviour's words, IT IS FINISHED.

Thy dying love, thy rising pow'r,
My Saviour dear, I'd sing:
In thee, I'd glory ev'ry hour,
Till thou to glory bring.

'Midst all my fears, and doubts, and woes,
Lord, still superior rise,
That I may triumph o'er my foes,
And meet thee in the skies.

AUGUST 24.

Is the LORD among us or not? Exod. 17:7.

A very awful question to proceed from the lips of any child of God. What was the cause of it? Why, the Lord tried their faith. That fails them: nature murmurs: the flesh wants gratification: they are athirst: they tempt the Lord: they chide Moses: he is in distress: he cries to the Lord, "What shall I do unto this people? they be ready to stone me." Mr. Henry judiciously observes here, "They do in effect suppose, that Moses was an impostor: Aaron a deceiver: the pillar of cloud and fire a mere sham and illusion, which had imposed on their senses; that long series of miracles, which had saved, rescued, and fed them, a chain of cheats; and the promise of Canaan, a banter upon them. It was all so, if the Lord was not among them. Observe, it is a great provocation to God for us to question his presence, providence, or promise; especially for his people to do it, who are so much obliged to trust him." Well might Moses call this place Massah and Meribah, that is, temptation and strife. Disciple, wast thou never at Massah and Meribah? Did you never tempt your God, by forgetting his past dealings of love and favour to you—passing over the sweet experiences of thy soul, in former days of light and liberty, peace and love, calling all in question, and ready to set all down as mere delusions? Hast thou not been ready to question whether the Lord is with thee or not? O if thou hast not, I know one who has, and with grief of soul testifies of it: with shame of face confesses it, and with humble prayer would cry, God be merciful to me a sinner! O how trying this to a God of patience! How dishonouring this to a God of love!

But his patience fails not: his love never changes; his mercy endureth for ever. May this shame our unbelief. Again, wast thou never at Meribah? At the waters of strife? Hast thou not contended with the Lord's prophets, as though they had invited thee from the land of nature, into the wilderness, to die for thirst after the waters of salvation? Hast not thou with the Psalmist, said in thy heart, "All men are liars?" (Psalm 116:11.) God has forgotten to be gracious. His promise is to come to an end for ever. I shall never see the light of the living. I know who can hold up his hand, and plead guilty. O let us rebuke ourselves for our unbelief: cry to the Lord for pardon, and to strengthen our faith. And instead of questioning, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Let us in faith confess, The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Psalm 46:7.

Thou art, O Lord, my soul's relief,
Thou hast me bless'd with grace:
Forgive my sins, my unbelief,
Shew me thy loving face.

Thy patience, Lord, I oft have tried,
But yet am out of hell:
Where can I find such love beside,
Matchless, unsearchable!

AUGUST 25.

I am found of them that sought me not. Isa. 65:1.

Every display of the Saviour's grace, is a jewel in his mediatorial crown. O what hearts have we, that we are not more humble before him, more thankful to him, and more joyful in him! Jesus, help us Gentile sinners, to look back, to look within, to look up, and to look forward, to excite humility, thankfulness, and joy of heart. (1st.) Look back, O my soul. View thy natural state; lying dead asleep in the arms of the wicked one—dead to God—under the power of sin—in love with the world—blind to the charms of Christ, without a single desire after him, or the least care for thy immortal soul. (2d.) Look within, dost thou find affection to Jesus, and desires after him? Is it the language of thy heart, none but Christ—I look to none but him—I expect salvation from him, and him only? O whence this mighty change? Say, did you first seek Christ, or Christ you? Did your desires first go out after Christ, or his desires towards you? O in the fervor of love, you must cry out, Pride, thou busy foe, avaunt! I must, I should have gone to hell, without a single desire of salvation by Jesus, if he had not sought me, and made himself manifest to me. His grace was first in the work. Then, (3d.) Look up, give Jesus the whole and sole glory. O to think, when there was nothing in us to invite the loving Spirit down, but every thing to cause him to loath us, and to leave us—yet, O matchless love, and sovereign grace! he shewed us Christ, drew us to Christ, and caused us to receive Christ. Rejoice, love, adore, and praise. Who can resist divine attraction? Who is proof against divine love? Who that loves, can love enough? (4th.) Look forward,

soul! heaven is before you: Jesus stands ready to receive you: God the Father to embrace you: God the Son to glory in you: and God the Spirit to triumph over you. Glory shall complete what grace has begun. O study the grace and love of Jesus, that is our heaven below; to praise him for it, will be our eternal employ above. But one thing remains, give God the glory of all this amazing grace. Study from day to day, and from hour to hour, to do it by the faith of your hearts, the words of your lips, and the obedience of your lives. No consideration whatever, can beat down your native pride—sink into genuine humility, animate with holy love to all cheerful obedience, like this, “God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5:8.

Then since I have my Saviour found,
And tasted of his love,
I'll tell poor sinners all around
That they its pow'r may prove.

The Spirit found me dead in sin,
And led me unto Christ;
I felt such precious pow'r within,
I could not him resist.

AUGUST 26.

I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Job. 30:23.

What sweet familiarity does grace make, between God and believing sinners! How freely can they speak to him, upon that solemn event, death. In the exercise of faith, we think of it, without terror, and speak of it with delight. Why so? Because we have no sin, and are not sinners? No. But because we know Christ the friend of sinners, who has taken away all our sins, conquered death for us, subdued the fear of death in us, brought life and immortality to us, and is ever before the throne pleading for us. Yet we *know*, also, HE will bring us to death. O this is soul-comforting knowledge! What wilt thou, my loving God, my precious Saviour, who bore my sins in thine own body on the tree, bring me to death? Are the issues of life and death in thy hand? Cannot death approach nor assault me, till thou give him commission, and bring me to death? I thank thee, my dear Lord, for this knowledge. Then death, thou art no more the hideous monster, the frightful king of terrors to my soul. No. My dear Friend brings me to thee, that I may salute thee, as an angel of love, and kiss thee as a messenger of peace. Fond parents carry their children to see fine sights, to delight them. They avoid horrid spectacles which would terrify them. So doth our heavenly Father by us. He brings us to death, that we may see and be delighted, with the glorious victories of his beloved Son. Here we behold him, a triumphant conqueror over sin and death, and over the devil, who had the power of death. Our Father God *brings* us to the field of battle. He carries us

through it. He shews us the spoils of his Son's glorious conquest. There says he, See, reap and wear the blessed trophies of his victorious cross. All are for you, my children. Your enemies are all slain. A crown of glory for you, where you shall for ever reign. No sooner are we brought to, and carried through the field of battle, but shouts of victory await us. Hark, hark to the immortal spirits above. We shall soon be brought to join them in eternal shouts of *Salvation to God and the Lamb*. Now this is the life of faith. Believing in Christ, the fear of death is conquered. The hope of life is enjoyed. Eternal life is possessed; and we cry out, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? We have an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Cor. 5:1.

Why need I fear when God shall say,
My son, now you must die?
I'll bring thro' death to reign on high,
With me eternally.

My Father gives his only Son,
To conquer death for me:
This work Christ hath for ever done,
I shall his glory see.

AUGUST 27.

Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. John 13:37.

Peter seems now in a happy frame indeed. All is warmth of love and sunshine of joy. Ecstasies carry us out of ourselves. We forget what we are, where we are, what we are exposed to, and what may soon befall us. Like Peter on the mount, we are apt to speak without due consideration. We know not what we say. The fire of passion exceeds the bounds of solid judgment. "Why cannot I follow thee *now*? Let the way be strewn with ever so many difficulties—let ever so many dangers oppose, nothing is able to dismay or dishearten me. I have just now such fervent love to thee, that I could face death in the most frightful form, and lay down my life with the greatest pleasure for thy sake." Doubtless, Peter now thought himself perfect and free from all sin. What thinkest, O soul? Is Peter's language becoming him or not? Is it not a noble and generous declaration? Art thou ready to say, I wish I could boldly say so too? Ah, soul! whatever thou mayest think of these high flown expressions, our Lord soon took poor Peter down. Do not be discouraged at hearing professors speak great swelling words. I was once where a person said, "This world is nothing to me. It is quite under my feet. I have so much love, that I care no more about the world, than if I were not in it." Lord, thought I, what a wretch am I? Not fit to be thy disciple. But, alas! in a little time, the world attracted that same person (I fear) from Jesus, under its power. Beware of self-confidence. Live low; lie low; think low; speak low of thyself, let thy frames be what they may. Now hear our

Lord's reply to Peter. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?" I do not question thy sincerity, but I do thy strength. I pity thy vain confidence: I am concerned for thy self-sufficiency. Poor vain man; thou hast turned thine eye from my love, to thine own. Thou trustest in the glow of thine affections—thy confidence is in thy fine frames and warm feelings, instead of my love to thee, and my power to uphold thee. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, (instead of laying down thy life for me) the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." What shall we say to this? Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. (Psalm 39:5.) Consider this: and ever remember the unchangeable love of Christ to such poor, vain, changeable creatures. Well may he say, "I am the LORD, I change not, therefore ye are not consumed." Mal. 3:6.

Now warm with love our souls are bold,
For Christ we count all things but loss:
Anon, alas! our hearts grow cold.
We shrink and flee from every cross.

Love follows us thro' all our ways,
Melts down and breaks our stubborn hearts;
The love of Jesus ne'er decays,
But saves us from all hellish arts.

AUGUST 28.

Worthy is the LAMB. Rev. 5:12.

This the song, this the glory of angels and redeemed sinners heaven. To know, believe in, love, and follow this Lamb, constitutes our heaven upon earth. Sin is our hell. But this Lamb of God taketh away our sin. Then heaven is in our souls. O that ever we should be ashamed of this Lamb, who is heaven's wonder and heaven's glory! Is not this thought of being ashamed of God's Lamb, like a dagger to our heart? Lamb of God, have mercy upon us! Why is our dear Saviour called a *Lamb*? (1st.) Because of his immaculate purity. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners: without a spot of sin, or stain of impurity. (2d.) He was meek and inoffensive like a lamb. A lamb has no weapon of hostility. It never hurts any one. It cannot defend itself against assaults. It becomes an easy prey. All this Christ was in his life. Therefore, (3d.) like a lamb, he was taken and slain. He was the very paschal Lamb, to take away our sin, by his blood. (4th.) A slain lamb, is precious for food, and useful for clothing. So is Jesus. His flesh is meat indeed: his blood is drink indeed. His righteousness is the smiling of our souls. We live by feeding on his flesh and blood. We are justified in his righteousness. Our sins are washed away in his precious blood. Our souls are perfect before God, in his glorious righteousness. Can you say from your inmost soul, *Worthy is the Lamb*? Then you have the grace of heaven in your hearts. Proclaim it *aloud*, as they do in glory, with your lips; and shew it forth in your life. Study to walk worthy of the Lamb. Look at your sins. Humble yourself before the *Lamb*. Honour him by

believing, that he has atoned for them, and took them *all* away from before God, by his blood. Look at yourself as a sinner, whose nature is black as hell, and deformed as a devil. Glorify the *Lamb*, for redeeming you to God by his blood—presenting you before God in his righteousness, and making you one with God, by his grace. Look constantly on yourself, as a saved sinner, by the *Lamb*. Have nothing to do with any other name under heaven, for salvation from sin, death, and hell. Of all the faith of your heart, the love of your soul, and glory of your life, *Worthy is the Lamb*—And, O let it be the daily joy and rejoicing of your spirit, that you, a vile sinner, shall soon join the redeemed around his throne, incessantly and eternally to shout his praise, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.

O for an heart to love and praise
The Lamb who dy'd for sin,
Who loves and keeps us all our days,
And sanctifies within.

More of thy comforts shed abroad,
O God the Holy Ghost!
That we may love our dying Lord,
And crucify each lust.

AUGUST 29.

Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Cor. 12:9.

Though St. Paul is not now in the third heavens, yet he is not content, to speak any language below the superlative degree, *most gladly*. O, says he, "I have had the richest experience of my own weakness and impotence, that ever I had in my life. I should be most glad, every day, to be thus emptied and laid low at the feet of Christ, that the all-sufficiency of his grace, and the power of his strength might be made perfect in me. What does he mean by infirmities? All that weakness, feebleness, and inability, which he found in his nature, to withstand sin and Satan, to bear up under his crosses, trials, and distresses—to run the way of God's commandments—to fight the good fight of faith, etc. I will rather glory in these. What means he? I will glory, rejoice, and be glad, that self is laid low, my proud nature debased, my self-exalting views brought down, and that I am entirely emptied of all self-sufficiency. I will *rather* glory in this, than in any thing else. Why so? "That the power of Christ may rest upon me." When full of the pride of nature, and self-sufficiency, the soul sees not the need of Christ's grace. A full stomach loathes the honey-comb. When strong in nature's power, the strength of Christ is not sought after. But when Satan buffets—infirmitie prevail—nature fails and sinks, hope and help from self forsake us, when the Saviour is sought to. The soul goes right humbly to the Lord. The sinner's extremity is the Lord's opportunity. When Peter begins to sink, self-confidence forsakes him, and he cries, Lord save or I perish. Then Christ

exerts his power and saves him. When Satan thinks to buffet Paul out of his faith and hope in the Lord, he only buffets him out of his self-exaltings and self-confidence. He drives him to the throne of grace. He besought the Lord again and again. The Lord delivers not, but only tells him, my grace is sufficient for thee. St. Paul felt the power of Christ resting upon him. Learn hence, O soul, not to be distressed at thy infirmities, a sense of thy weakness and emptiness: glory in them, that Christ may be glorified by thee, causing his power to rest upon thee. For mind that precious word of his. Let thy weak and infirm spirit hang upon it from day to day. "He giveth power to the faint: and to them who have no might he increaseth strength." Isa. 40:29.

Tho' weak to stand, and prone to fall,
Yet we alas, are full of pride!
O Saviour dear on thee we call,
Humble and keep us near thy side.

When weak and faint we find our heart,
Still will we glory in thy pow'r
Thy strength'ning grace shall ne'er depart
From thine in their distressing hour.

AUGUST 30.

I said in my haste, all men are liars. Psa. 116:11.

We are prone to be too hasty in our censures of others, while the greatest fault lies at our own door. David here brands all men, with being liars, when he himself was the greatest liar of all, if we take the words in this sense. Here, he even charges Samuel the prophet of the Lord with a lie. For he had anointed him to be king, and assured him of the kingdom. But he spoke in haste, without due thought and deliberation—unadvisedly, under temptation, when he was off his guard, and fled from the rage of Saul. Though some think, David rather uttered the bold language of confident faith. I said in my *flight*, that notwithstanding all the fury of Saul, and all the suggestions of my enemies to the contrary, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." (Rom. 3:4.) The Lord will surely preserve me. I shall certainly be king. David was the subject, both of faith and unbelief: of a hasty spirit, which exalteth folly, as well as of a meek spirit, which in the eyes of the Lord is of great price. Times of temptation, sometimes draw from the lips, hasty speeches, which wound the heart, and cause it to mourn. O believer, though thou hast cause to be ashamed of thy unbelief and hasty folly, yet be not ashamed to confess it. To commit a fault, and strive to extenuate it, proceeds from pride and unbelief. Settle it well in thine heart, what thy present state is. Consider daily the number and force of thine enemies. Their name is legion, for they are many. Never forget the total sinfulness of thy own nature. All this will make thee humble, and watchful over thyself. Know and remember also, the love and faithfulness of thy God and Saviour. He

who has redeemed thee to God, by his own blood, will save thee from thy sinful self, and from the power of all thine enemies. Say of all who dare contradict this, they are liars. Though weak in thyself, be strong in thy Lord. Though sinful in thyself, rejoice that thou art righteous in him. Let the faith of this inspire thy heart with boldness before the throne of God. There go constantly, as a poor, helpless, needy sinner, viewing thyself perfectly righteous in Christ, and perfectly accepted of God in his beloved Son. Give God the glory of his truth. Pronounce all liars who dare oppose it. Give no credit to the suggestions of thy own mind, contrary to the full and free declarations of thy Lord's love and grace. Remember the convictions of sin by the Spirit of truth, are to bring thee comfort from Christ. The accusations for sin by the lying spirit, are to distress thy heart and drive thee from Christ, *who is the truth*. John 14:6.

Forgive my Lord each hasty word,
Against thy truth and grace,
I foolish am, and self-abhorr'd,
O shew thy smiling face.

AUGUST 31.

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Luke 24:44.

Christ's work was to fulfil all Scripture. It is ours to believe, that the Scriptures are all fulfilled in Christ. Hence we are filled with all joy and peace in believing. (Rom. 15:13.) We complain of the weakness of faith. We neglect the means by which it is strengthened. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. By it faith is strengthened. That which comes not from the word, and is not supported by the word, is not faith, but phantom. It will soon evaporate. Our Saviour was now risen. His work was finished. He appeals to the understanding of his disciples. He refers them to what he had spoken to them, before he died for them. Understanding the word in the heart, is like the stomach receiving, and digesting the food for the whole body. All parts of it are nourished from it. O let the word of Christ dwell richly in you. Treasure it up in your memories. Exercise your understanding upon it. Digest it in your heart. So you will surely be nourished, edified, and comforted by it. Your faith will grow exceedingly. In what? Why, in what Christ hath fulfilled for you. Are you ready to say, how do I know, that he hath fulfilled all things for me? This is stumbling at the threshold, instead of entering in at the door. This is questioning, instead of believing. Our Lord gives one general answer to this. "According to your faith, be it unto you." (Matt. 9:29.) Believe Christ's words. Believe his work. So shall you enjoy the comforts of his love and

salvation; and be animated to obey his will. See, (1st.) O Christian, you have not followed a cunningly devised fable. Your faith in Christ is agreeable to what is written in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning him. (2d.) Hence, rejoice. Is the law fulfilled for you by Christ? Then are you righteous in the sight of God, even as Christ is righteous. Study the purity and perfection of the law of God. Fall down in humility as a condemned sinner by it. Glory in Jesus, as your law-fulfiller, in whom you have everlasting righteousness. (3d.) Study the prophets and the psalms. You will always find somewhat concerning Jesus in them. Know, all that concerns him, is your highest concern upon earth. The more knowledge you have of him, and the more faith in him, so much the more will you love him, and answer the end of your new creation in him, even to glorify him in your holy life and obedient walk. "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thess. 5:18.

SEPTEMBER 1.

Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 1 John 2:20.

A Christian may falsely indulge this covetous wish, to have his head filled with the knowledge, and his heart with the love of Christ. What is knowledge without love? The very devils could say of Christ, "I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God." They have a more distinct knowledge of Christ, believe more of him, and have just as much love to him, as Arians, Socinians, and other infidels, who deny his eternal power and godhead, and his self-existent deity. The devils declare, "what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" Infidelity in men causes them to give our Saviour no higher name than this, and to allow him to be no more than a prophet, mighty in word and deed. But they will have nothing to do with him as the eternal Son of God, atoning sin by his precious blood, justifying sinners by his perfect righteousness, and finishing salvation for them by his life and death. This is from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, agreeable to the word of truth. All who receive the truth in love, are Christians, or anointed ones of God. (1st.) They have an unction. The Son of God was anointed, as well as chosen, in his office and work, as our Saviour, the holy child Jesus, whom God anointed. (Acts 4:27.) So all who are chosen to salvation, are also anointed of God. (2 Cor. 21.) They, as members of Christ, partake in a measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which their Lord and Head received without measure. (John 3:34.) (2d.) This is from the *Holy One*. This is one of our dear Saviour's names. He is often called by it. None but God is holy. But Christ is the

Holy One, therefore he is God. Mind, soul, you are a disciple of a holy Saviour, therefore be holy in your walk. This unction is from the Holy One, received out of the fulness of Jesus. We cannot have any of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but in, and by, and from the holy Lamb of God. The love of the Father centres in him, and flows from him to us. The graces of the Spirit are without measure all treasured up in him, and flow from him to us. We receive all grace out of the fulness of Christ. O let us keep the eye of our faith, and the hope of our souls steadily fixed upon our *Holy One, Jesus*. Let us glorify him, and praise the dear Spirit for this unction. This teaches us, (3d.) to *know all things*. O then, saith a poor soul, I have not this unction. I am weak and ignorant. I know nothing. No! Do you not know that you are a poor lost, hopeless, helpless sinner; that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; that Jesus has finished salvation, and that the Father is well pleased in and with him? Dost thou know and believe this in thine heart? Why,—“This is life eternal, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ.” John 17:3.

SEPTEMBER 2.

The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, who were ready to perish. Isa. 27:13.

One trumpet has been blown, at the giving of the law, on mount Sinai: the voice of it sounded long, and waxed louder and louder. It made even Moses to fear and quake exceedingly, and all the people tremble. Soon, very soon, (who knows but it may be the next moment, in the twinkling of an eye?) the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. (1 Cor. 15:52.) Tremendous voice! most solemn sound! The prophet asks, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" (Amos. 3:6.) If the alarm of war, and the approach of an enemy should be sounded in the dead of the night, what fear and terror would seize us! Must we hear the sound of the last trumpet, calling us to judgment? Blessed, eternally blessed be our God, for the blowing of this *great trumpet*: it is the sound of great love: it proclaims salvation—to whom? Even to great sinners: such as see their sins so great, that they are *ready to perish*. The sound of this great trumpet expels the legal fears of the first, and the awful terrors which arise in our minds by the sound of the last trumpet; for it proclaims, that "the great God is our Saviour, Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:13.) Our Judge is our Advocate, our Saviour, and Friend. Do we see ourselves ready to perish, without hope and help, in and from ourselves? Are the curses of a broken law upon us, and is the glittering sword of justice brandished over us? The great trumpet sounds, *Come, come* to Christ, ye sinners, who are ready to perish, and must perish if ye do not come. Saith Jesus, "*All* that the Father

giveth me, *shall* come to *me*." (John 6:37.) Therefore, this great trumpet of gospel salvation shall not be blown in vain. Those who never saw themselves ready to perish, can hear neither music nor charms in its sound. It is foolishness to them. But to sensible, perishing sinners, it is a joyful sound to their ears: it proclaims victory over sin, the law, Satan, death, and hell, through Jesus, who loved us, and gave himself for us. Nor less doth it proclaim holiness and happiness. For it calls us to war with our sins—to enjoy peace with God—and to walk in sweet fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3.) This great gospel trumpet, like those of old, is all of a piece, (Numb. 10:2.) It does not give an uncertain sound: but it proclaims a free, full, and finished salvation by Christ, to the glory of God, Yea, and Amen.

The gospel like a trumpet, shrill
Doth pierce us to the heart,
Awakes our souls, subdues our will
From all our sins to part.

Tho' in a lost and fearful state,
We to the Saviour come:
He never says, 'It is too late,'
But always finds us room.

SEPTEMBER 3.

And he sought where to weep. Gen. 43:30.

To weep! What! when he saw his beloved brother Benjamin, and heard that his affectionate aged father was alive and well! Yes: the sight of the one, and the news of the other, created such an ecstasy of joy in his heart, as was too great to bear. He sought where to vent it by tears. O, had one followed good Joseph to his chamber, and heard what passed there between his God and his soul! Methinks I see the dear man fall prostrate, crying out in a flood of grateful, joyful tears, O, what a God do I serve! What amazing scenes of his providence have opened to my view! How has the Lord appeared graciously in my behalf! how strangely has he exalted me in life! and now, to crown all, and complete my happiness, I see my beloved brother, and hear of the welfare of my honoured father. Doubtless he wept, he prayed; he praised, he rejoiced, he loved, he adored his God, his kind preserver, his bountiful benefactor, his dear Saviour. Methinks, one cannot meditate on Joseph's conduct, without calling to mind some sweet, weeping seasons of spiritual joy, our souls have been favoured with. When, in some highly-favoured moments, the blessed Spirit has brought some joyful tidings of, and some love-tokens from our once crucified, but ever living Brother in flesh, Jesus; O then, what joy has sprung up in our souls! Too big for utterance! When he has assured us of his love to us; that we shall soon see him as he is, be with him where he is, and eternally enjoy him, and his Father, and our Father, in glory: O the rapture of this faith! Thus, we are ready to fly from the world, and all its concerns,

and leave even our brethren in Christ too. We seek to be alone, to pour out our souls; to give vent to our joy, in a flood of joyful, loving, grateful tears. Then, like the disciples on the mount, we cry out, It is good to be here. This is sweet. Methinks, my soul is drowned in tears of love! Now, are we not ready to wish, O that it were always thus with me! But neither Joseph, you, nor I, could live under such melting frames—such ecstasy, and in such rapture. The body could not support them: my weak body could not. Neither are they always good for the soul to be in. If so, we should be always favoured with them. This we are fully assured of: for, "*no good thing* will the Lord withhold from them who walk uprightly." (Ps. 84:11.) But these, God withholds. You never read of one saint in the Bible, always in an ecstasy of joy. "He who freely gave us his Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32.

Dear Saviour, when we feel thy love,
Our hearts oft weep for joy:
We long to be with thee above,
Where passions never cloy.

SEPTEMBER 4.

Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man who layeth hold on it. Isa. 56:2.

Many poor blind sinners we meet with, who are saying, Do not puzzle me with your points of doctrine. This is my religion, 'I do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with my God.' There is scarcely a text in the whole Bible so often quoted, and so frequently hackneyed by ignorant men, to keep up their vain hopes and self-righteous confidence, as this of Micah. (6:8.) As a striking instance of their walking humbly with God, they reject the glorious gospel of his grace, set at nought the atonement and righteousness of his Son, ridicule the inspiration of his Spirit, and walk in the pride of their hearts, fulfilling the lusts of their flesh. They are cursed by the mouth of the Lord. But here is the only blessed man described by him. (1st.) In his doing. What? *Justice?* He has a sincere regard to every thing which is moral, just, and good. Without this, know, ye professors of faith, your religion is vain. Ye are not the blessed of the Lord. "Faith without works is dead." (James 2:26.) (2d.) *He keeps judgment.* He retains a right judgment of *himself*, that he is a poor miserable sinner: *of sin*, that it is exceeding sinful, most hateful to a holy God, and has made him most abominable in his sight. *Of the law*: that by it he is cursed: and by it he can never be justified, for he can never fulfil it. *Of God*: that he has concluded him under sin, that he might have mercy on him, and freely justify him, through the grace of Jesus. Am I this blessed man? Pause and consider. It is necessary to our blessedness, to know our curse. The blessed Spirit convinces us of it. (3d.) "That we

may lay hold on this." What? "My salvation." The salvation of God's Son, finished for the hopeless sons of Adam. "My righteousness revealed." Whereby God is just, and yet the justifier of every ungodly, unrighteous sinner, who, by faith, lays hold of this righteousness. All such sons of men are the blessed sons of God. O, rejoice in your blessed state! Glory in it. Give God the glory of it. But legal hearts and self-righteous spirits will be ever asking, what becomes of good works and a holy life? We answer, God not only justifies us by grace, but sanctifies by his Spirit. The grace of God, which brings salvation to us, teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:12.

This is the *one*, the only way
For sinners to be blest;
To flee from sin without delay,
And refuge take in Christ.

In him we find a spring of hope,
A sense of joy and peace:
This keeps our sinking spirits up,
Till we obtain release.

SEPTEMBER 5.

The apostles said unto the LORD, increase our faith. Luke 17:5.

Natural men tauntingly say, "O! you don't mind good works; faith is to do every thing for you." Truly, faith is all; for it includes the object of faith—the Lord. For, indeed, faith has no existence without its object. Consider, (1st.) is it not a good work to forgive an offending brother? This is what our Lord here teaches. The apostles were made truly sensible, that they could not do this without faith; nay, not without the increase of faith. Therefore, they prayed for it. Real believers are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that they should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10.) They are a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:14.) Thus, they love to glorify their heavenly Father. (2d.) They know that all good works proceed from faith, and from the increase of faith. For Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. (Eph. 3:17.) This is the source and spring of all comfort, and every good work. Without this, what is life to a Christian? Verily, but an uncomfortable breathing, not worthy the name of life. Christ dwelling in the heart, constitutes heaven upon earth. Just as uncomfortable as this world would be, if the sun were blotted out of heaven, would the Christian be without the indwelling of Christ. How hast thou found thy soul, O Christian, this day? Hast thou found Christ in thee, the hope of glory? If not, it is for want of faith. If thou hast, dost thou not desire to enjoy more of it? It is to be had by the increase of faith. Pray for it. (3d.) Faith deadens the soul to the love of sin, and the love of this world. The increase of

faith kills the love of both. "For this is the victory, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.) (4th.) Faith brings the prospect of heavenly glory into view. The increase of faith brings fuller assurance to the heart of our enjoyment of it—quicken our diligence in the way to it—excites ardent desires in our souls after the full fruition of it, that we may be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. (5th.) See who is the author and finisher of our faith. Do you complain, that your faith is weak, and your corruptions strong? Remember, that dear Christ who died for your sins, can strengthen your faith. Look unto Jesus. Cry unto him to increase your faith; so shall your heart be happy, your life holy, and your soul strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. 2:1.

Jesu! thou author of our faith,
Increase its pow'r, we pray:
O make us faithful unto death!
Live in us every day.

O'er all our lusts, and reas'ning pride,
May precious faith prevail;
Looking to Christ, and none beside—
Our Christ within the veil.

SEPTEMBER 6.

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Luke 24:39.

One *Amintos* had performed some valiant acts, and lost part of his arm in the field of battle for his country's good. His brother *Aechylus* was about to be condemned to die. Amintos came into court, spake not a word, but only lifted up the stump of his arm without a hand: as though he had said, See what I have lost in my country's cause! His silent oratory prevailed, and saved his brother's life. What a much more affecting sight does our dear Lord now present to his disciples! He called upon them, he calls upon us to *behold*: they, by the eye of sense; we, by the eye of faith. Consider, the reasons for this; (1st.) To compose and comfort their minds. They were terrified and affrighted. They took him for a spirit. Christ is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He sympathizes with us in all our troubles. One cause of them is misapprehension of the nature of Christ: we too often forget that he was a *perfect man*, like unto us in all things, except "Behold my hands and my feet, with the nail prints in them: it is I *myself*." The very same man, with the same flesh and blood, who lately hung upon the cross. Handle me: feel me. (2d.) It was to confirm their faith, in his dying for their sins, and rising again for their justification. He died as a weak man. He rose as the almighty God. As God-man, he atoned for sin, conquered death and hell for us. The faith of this is the source of all hope, and the spring of all peace to our souls. (3d.) He says, *Behold*, etc. to quicken our love. O soul! can you behold by faith, and think of the love and sufferings of Jesus for your salvation, and not love him? His pierced body,

hands, and feet, are the marks of his great love and agony of sufferings for you. O! love, rejoice, and adore. Does he not deserve the whole love of our heart, and the entire affections of our soul? *Behold*, (4th.) that all your hope may be in him. Beware of that cursed notion of pride, which some advance, they pretend to believe in Christ for the pardon of sin, but, for their *final* justification, hope in their own works. No, my Lord: the sin-atoning, law-fulfilling, soul-justifying work is thine, and thine alone. I will hope in no other. My soul, I charge thee, fix, constantly fix all thy attention, all thy hope, upon thy once pierced Lord. My conscience, I charge thee, when base intruders would rival his glory, banish them. Cry with abhorrence, get ye hence. "What have I to do any more with idols?" Hos. 14:8.

Behold, my soul, the scars and wounds
Which Jesus in his body wore:
See, how his precious love abounds!
Think of thy sins—'twas them he bore.

Say, faith, what answer dost thou give?
Pardon and peace unto my heart;
That to Christ's glory I should live,
And never from his love depart.

SEPTEMBER 7.

Peter said, man, I know not what thou sayest. Luke 22:60.

No, Peter! Why he speaks plain enough. He is confident of thy person, knows thy voice, and the very brogue of thy tongue. He boldly affirms, "Of a truth thou wast with Jesus." This is a downright lie, to say, "I know not what thou sayest." Peter is ashamed of his Lord. Is he not ashamed of himself? Not yet. He lied horribly. Next, he cursed and swore bitterly. Might we not expect to hear next, he was damned eternally? He deserved it. Was he here now, he would confess it from the very ground of his heart. But he is above, confessing his desert of damnation, and ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb. For, "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." O who can say, what there was in that turn, and that look! Lord, give us to feel some of the grace and power of it, that we may improve it. Consider, (1st.) sin is sin, in God's saints, as well as others. Yea, their sins exceed all others. Yes, and God sees sin in them too, as well as others. And he will surely punish them for sin too. Let us not be wise above what is written. Saith the Lord, "You only have I known (with the love of a tender Father) of all the families of the earth, *therefore* I will punish you for *all* your iniquities." (Amos 3:2.) Who can say what a hell of agonies Peter felt, when he wept bitterly? He fully experienced that truth which he afterwards preached to others. "Judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Pet. 4:17.) (2d.) See what this judgment is. Not damnation for sin, but condemnation for sin in the heart and conscience. The sight of it: feeling, mourning, groaning under a sense of it: looking up to God, with a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a

sorrowful soul, crying out, "Against thee, O Lord, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight." Nothing but thy blood, O Jesus, can cleanse me. O my God, let thy grace pardon me, and thy Spirit comfort me. (3d.) What affects any sinner thus? The Saviour's turning and looking upon the soul. Sin naturally hardens the heart, and sears the conscience. Peter, after his awful fall, would have run away from Christ: given himself up to the service of sin and Satan, till he fell into hell, if the Lord had left him to himself. So would you and I. But Jesus *turns* from his anger against our sins: turns to us in love. He *looks*. Instead of frowning us into black despair, and eternal damnation, he looks with love: he speaks love into our souls: he melts our hearts with his gracious, loving looks, into sorrow and remorse for our sins; and with hopes of mercy and pardon from his loving heart. "For where sin abounded, grace much more abounds." Rom. 5:20.

His firmest purpose will not stand,
Behold his guilt and shame;
Lord keep me by thy mighty hand,
And I shall do the same.

SEPTEMBER 8.

I know that my Redeemer liveth. Job 19:25.

Matters are sometimes brought to a close point between God and the soul. It is stript of all its comforts. The soul is in heaviness. (1 Pet. 1:6.) It is broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, as the Psalmist most emphatically paints the scenes of horror and affliction. (Psa. 44:19.) So that he says, "I had fainted, unless I had believed." (27:13.) Nothing within, nothing without, for the soul to stay itself upon, but the word of the Lord, and the Lord revealed in the word. Then is that sweet promise fulfilled. "They shall hang upon *him* all the glory of His Father's house." (Isa. 22:24.) This was Job's tried, tempted, afflicted, yet blessed state. Though all his comforts were dead, still his Redeemer lived. In the midst of all his losses, he had not lost this blessed knowledge. I *know*, it is a matter of the greatest certainty to my soul, I am as sure of it as my existence, that there is a Redeemer for lost sinners. I know he is *my* Redeemer. I have seen my want of him, and my certain destruction without his redemption. He *liveth*. While he lives my hopes cannot die, my soul cannot despair. Stript of all things beside, nothing can separate me from the love of Christ. I know Christ liveth at the right hand of God for *me*, because he liveth in my heart by faith. Such is the language of this Old Testament saint. Says Luther, "I had utterly despaired, had I not known that Christ was the head of the church." "Head over all things to his body, the church." (Eph. 1:22.) But how doth a soul know with Job, that Christ is *his* Redeemer, so as to say, with Paul, he loved *me*, and gave

himself for *me*? By the word of grace, we know there is a Redeemer. By the testimony of the Spirit of truth, through faith, the sinner is enabled to say, he is *mine*. *My* beloved, *my* friend. These are two infallible evidences of this. Christ has both our hearts and our hopes. Our heart is set upon him. Our hopes centre in him. (1st.) Christ is precious to our hearts. We have fellowship with him by faith. We know that he liveth, because we enjoy the comforts of his life and love in our souls. We know him both as dying for us, and also as living in us. He dwells in our hearts by faith. He sends us love tokens. He draws our affections to himself, from the world of sin and vanity. (2d.) Our hopes are in him. His Spirit gives us to see such an infinite perfection in his glorious work and finished salvation, as sickens us to every other hope: yea, kills self-righteousness, and self-confidence. "We become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom. 7:4.) We might as soon place our confidence in the righteousness of the thief on the cross, as in any righteousness of our own. "We know that he abideth in us, by the spirit he hath given us." 1 John 3:24.

Then dry your tears and tune your songs:
The Saviour lives again;
Not all the bolts and bars of death,
The conqueror could detain.

SEPTEMBER 9.

And he spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous. Luke 18:9.

Christ came into the world to save sinners from their sins into all holiness of heart and life. His gospel requires the strictest purity in walk and conversation. Those who have experienced its power, find their souls formed for this. But a self-righteous spirit is as odious to Christ, and as contrary to the genius of his gospel, as a profane swearer. Hence he spake this parable against such. See (1st.) who are here reproved. Every one who places his trust or confidence in any works of righteousness which he has done, or can do, to make himself righteous before God, or to justify himself, first or last, in whole or in part in God's sight. Such are properly Pharisees, or self-righteous persons. Lord, keep our souls humble before thee, that we fall not into this cursed pride and dangerous delusion. But such say, we do not trust in what we can do of ourselves, but what we are enabled to do by the grace of God. So this self-righteous Pharisee said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Here lies the very essence of this delusion. For the holiest saint in Christ is yet a sinner in himself; and his nature is as wicked as other men's are. The man, who does not see, and confess, as taught by Christ, Luke 17:10, (after all that he is by grace, and all that he has done by divine assistance) "Lord I am an unprofitable servant," is blinded by self-righteousness—has never seen the purity and spirituality of the law of God—the abominable vileness of his own nature—the glory and perfection of Christ's righteousness, and the necessity of his being found in

it, and clothed with it, to be justified before God. Such have not been convinced of sin and of righteousness, by the Spirit of truth, the glorifier of Jesus. See (2d.) The evil of this spirit of self-righteousness. (1st.) Such are Antinomians. They are against and make void the law: though they do not fulfil it, nor can be made righteous by it, yet they trust in themselves that they are righteous contrary to it. For it condemns them as sinners. (2d.) They are enemies to justification by God's grace through the righteousness of Christ. Like the Jews of old, they "have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, [that which the Son of God wrought out, which fulfilled the law of God, which he imputes to sinners, and by which he justifies sinners] and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to God's righteousness." (Rom. 10:3.) Here is ignorance and unbelief; to which, (3d.) is joined pride. They are of a different spirit to the humble Jesus. He loves *sinners*. "They despise others." See Isaiah 65:5.

"Not unto us, but thee alone,
Blest Lamb, be glory giv'n;
Here shall thy praises be begun,
And carried on in heav'n."

SEPTEMBER 10.

By the obedience of one, (or by ONE obedience) shall many be made righteous. Rom. 5:19.

Joyful truth to *miserable sinners*. O that this word was ever upon our minds, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord." (Isa. 55:8.) Our thoughts are, to make ourselves righteous by our own obedience; and our ways are, to be justified before God by our own righteousness. But the Lord calls us to forsake these unrighteous thoughts, as well as wicked ways, and to submit by faith, to his thoughts and his ways, to be made righteous by the obedience of ONE. Consider, (1st.) this negative implies that no obedience but ONE, can make any sinner righteous. O professor, what art thou seeking after, and striving to be and to do? What is the end of thy praying, reading, hearing, communicating, striving against sin, and seeking to excel in obedience, etc.? Is it to make thyself righteous? then it all proceeds from unbelief of this truth, by ONE obedience, shall many be righteous, and by no other obedience whatever. Then say some, "There is an end to all good works." No. From the faith of this all good works begin. There is indeed an end to all the evil works of unbelief, which are done to supplant the ONE spotless obedience of Christ, in making sinners righteous, to the establishing the filthy rags of man's righteousness. Taught by the Spirit of truth, through faith, my soul abhors this. I firmly believe, "whatsoever is not of faith, is of sin." (Rom. 14:23.) "Works which do not spring of faith in Jesus Christ, have the nature of sin." (Church Article XIII.) Hence, O my soul, no obedience of thine, before

faith in Christ, can make thee righteous. Obedience after faith doth not make thee righteous; for then thou art made righteous by the ONE obedience of Christ. Settle this matter well in thy conscience, the glory of thy God, and the comfort of thy soul, spring from it. For, (2d.) It is positively asserted, "By The obedience of ONE; or the ONE obedience of Christ, shall many be made righteous." The faith of God's elect takes the comfort of this, and will love Christ, live upon his righteousness, and give him the glory of it. But, (3d.) Who are made righteous by Christ's ONE obedience? *Many*. "The many sons whom Christ shall bring to glory." (Heb. 2:10.) Even *all*, who see themselves miserable sinners, and believe in Christ, for righteousness, unto justification of life. What a glorious way is this of making sinners righteous! (1st.) It secures all the glory to Christ. (2d.) It keeps the sinner humble before him; dependent on him; and prevents all self-righteous boasting. While, (3d.) it gives the poor sinner the greatest boldness, with access of confidence to God. (4th.) It inspires warm love to Christ, and the cheerful obedience of faith.

SEPTEMBER 11.

Behold, this dreamer cometh. Gen. 37:19.

St. James says, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy," (4:5.) This is fully manifest in the conduct of Joseph's brethren against him. Joseph seemed open hearted, simple, and without guile. If he had not told his dreams, he had not raised his brethren's envy. But the Lord's hand was in it: no thanks to them. Their cruelty to Joseph, raised him to the greatest eminence, and saved them from death by famine. Thus the Lord brings good out of evil. Methinks I see young Joseph coming towards his brethren, and they looking upon him with an air of the greatest contempt and derision, saying, "Behold, this dreamer cometh!" There, that's he, that we are all to bow down to, worship, and serve. Look at this mighty dreamer of foolish dreams. St. Paul, in enumerating the sufferings of the faithful, says, "Others had trials of *cruel mockings.*" (Heb. 11:36.) Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children whom the bears devoured; David by Michael, etc. But who of all the sons of men, ever had trials of such cruel mockings as the Son of God? Know then, O disciple, thou art not to be above thy Master. It is sufficient for thee to be as thy Master. Expect cruel mockings. Wast thou never mocked and derided for thy profession? Then thou hast reason to fear thou hast not been faithful to thy Lord. Else surely the world would have seen that thou hast been with Jesus, and as verily as they mocked him, they would deride thee. Though you need not cast your pearl before swine: or as Joseph did, tell *all* the dealings of God with your soul, to the men of the world; yet if you dare make an open profession of salvation

by the free grace of God, through Jesus *only*, your name will be up—mockings will be your portion. Yea, men will say of thee, as Joseph's brethren did of him, "Behold, this dreamer cometh." See that visionary, enthusiastic fool: he dreams that he is one of God's elect: that he has the witness of the Spirit: that he is sure of going to heaven, not for his works, but by grace, through faith only. Such honour have all God's saints. Pray now, who would wish, who would strive to escape it? Would you lose a badge of your profession—a mark of honour that you are the followers of the once mocked and derided Son of God? But beware of being deceived like those of old, with "the visions of their own heart." (Jer. 23:16.) But glory in the heavenly vision, the vision of the Spirit, the vision of faith. Let men mock on: let devils envy: yet the vision of faith is for an appointed time. Cruel mockings are only for a short season. Soon, very soon, you shall receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul, and be exalted above Joseph at Pharaoh's court. You shall be with Jesus above, where all is harmony, peace, and love.

SEPTEMBER 12.

She said, truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Matt. 15:27.

Here is blessed reasoning. It produced admiration in the Lord: "O woman, great is thy faith!" It obtained a free grace grant from him also: "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." Great faith! How does it appear? We do not find she came to Christ in full assurance of faith; saying, I know thou art *my* Saviour, I am assured thou hast loved *me*, and wilt save *me*. No. Still there was great faith without this. Look at her faith. Imitate it. She honoured the Lord by it. He honours her for it. (1st.) She was in trouble: she flies instantly to Christ. She tells him of her sorrows. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." To cry to Jesus for mercy, under a sense of being vexed with a devil, is the prayer of faith, and honours the Lord of glory. (2d.) Here are great discouragements. Christ answers her not a word. The disciples desire him to cure her, that they might get rid of her. But Jesus answers (not her, but his disciples) "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Was not this repulse enough to strike her dumb, and send her away in despair? But, (3d.) Instead of this, her faith grew stronger, and her importunity greater. She falls at his feet, with, Lord, *help me*. O, that was a strong appeal to the loving heart of our dear Lord. She brought her case to a point. Jesus, you can help me. None but you can. If you do not, I am miserable. Have you no compassion for a poor miserable sinner? Lord, help me. Thus casting herself upon the Lord's love and power, she at last obtained an answer from him. But

O, such a one, as was like a dagger to her heart, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs." Now does she turn away like a dog? No. (4th.) She had a child's heart and a child's faith too. For she again put her case home to the Saviour's heart. Mark it. I am a dog; a filthy, unclean creature; let me be fed as such, upon the falling crumb. I know, I do not deserve even that from thee. See what perseverance, faith, and prayer will do. It overcomes all difficulties: surmounts all objections: obtains the sought-for mercy. Some in our day would have thought this woman undervalued herself. But Jesus humbles those sinners to the very lowest, whom he raises to the very highest. O take up this resolution, "I will wait upon the Lord who hideth his face: I will look for him." Isa. 8:17.

Tho' vile, tho' hopeless is my case,
And in myself I've nought to plead;
Yet will I look to Jesu's grace,
He has all fulness for my need.

Tho' he don't grant at first my suit,
Yet will I hope, believe, and pray:
My soul be still importunate,
The wretched he ne'er sends away.

SEPTEMBER 13.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. Heb. 12:12.

Are you saying, my troubles are many, my burden is great, and hope deferred makes my heart sick? True, a faint heart makes weak hands and feeble knees. Then afflictions become intolerable, duty tiresome, prayer irksome, the ordinances like dry breasts, the lamp of spiritual life is expiring, the poor sinner grows dejected and dispirited, is ready to give up hope, and give way to despondency. The *Comforter* inspires a work for such, "lift up your hands," etc. Do you say, the advice is good, but the practice hard? St. Paul supposes it: for he introduces it with *wherefore*. O, I dearly love these Scripture adverbs! Much courage and comfort are gained by attending to them. Wherefore or for which reason, lift up your weak hands, or the weak hands of others. Consider, why, or wherefore we should do this. (1st.) We have Jesus to look unto for patience. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He bore our sins. He hath for ever taken away the curse due to them. He has made our peace with God. God is in him reconciled to us. He who endured the cross for our sins, and despised the shame of being treated as a malefactor, in love to our persons, is now before the throne of God praying for us. O this look is reviving; (2d.) Consider Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, lest ye be weary and faint. He was made perfect through sufferings, that he might bring many sons unto glory. He is bringing you, through much tribulation, into his kingdom. Consider the love and sorrows of Jesus for you. Look on yourself as a suffering member, of a once suffering

head. So shall your weak mind be strengthened, and your weary mind refreshed. (3d.) Forget not, but consider the exhortation, *my son*. Precious appellation! God is your Father. He loves you with the same everlasting and unchangeable love. He chastises you as his child. Why? Because he is wroth against you? No, but to make you more like himself in holiness. O then lift up your hands to your Brother Jesus, your Father God, in confident faith, in humble prayer. Though all within is clouded dejection, yet all above is sunshine, joy, peace, and consolation. Consider your hope. "It is an anchor of the soul." On what is it fixed? It entereth into that within the veil, whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus. Heb. 6:19, 20.

When knees are weak, & hands hang down,
And we can't run or pray,
Still Jesus is before the throne
For us, tho' weak, each day.

Then let our sighing hearts, to Christ
In faith and hope ascend:
And all our doubts and fears resist,
Christ is our faithful friend.

SEPTEMBER 14.

He saw his glory, and spoke of him. John 12:41.

Ministers who do not preach Christ, sinners who do not speak of Christ, are objects of pity, not of our wrath. Their eyes are blind to his matchless glory. Their hearts do not understand his unparalleled love. But consider, (1st.) When once Christ's glory is displayed, and his love believed in the heart, the tongue will speak of him. So Isaiah found it. So did that poor woman of Samaria, "she ran into the city," she caught hold of one and another. She eagerly cried, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" Surely it is, what think ye? (John 4:29.) She had sweet experience. Here was no self-exalting. No cry, see me, admire me. What fine experience I have got! One is sometimes grieved to read, or hear people tell of their experiences, when they tend only to make the poor sinner appear, as somewhat glorious in his own eyes, and to be admired by his fellow sinners. This is not right. If the sinner's vileness is not fully explored, and the Saviour's glory *only* exalted, such souls know not as they ought to know. Such experiences are not profitable, they are not worth attending to. (2d.) When sinners see Christ's glory, they will speak to him of God the Father. They will come in his name. They will plead his blood only for the pardon of sin, his righteousness alone for the justification of their souls, his intercession for their obtaining every blessing in earth and heaven. Thus we can come boldly to a throne of grace. Thus we expect freely to obtain mercy to relieve us, and grace to comfort us. Thus we are sure, perfectly sure, we are welcome to God. For he hath told us

so. It pleased the Father, that in Christ all fulness (of grace and glory) should dwell. (Col. 1:19.) "That out of his fulness we should receive." (John 1:16.) Having seen Christ's glory, we come to him for this grace. For (3d.) The sight of Christ's glory, eclipses our own fancied glory. The more we see of Jesus, the less we like ourselves. We grow out of conceit with ourselves. What glory is there in a filthy dunghill, a cage of unclean birds, a nest of serpents, toads, and adders? Worse, inexpressibly worse are we than all these. Our natures are half-beast, half-devil. Yet, astonishing love! Jesus displays the glory of his grace to us. Nothing but unbelief prevents our beholding it. "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see my glory?" John 11:40.

When I my Saviour's glory see
Revealed in the word to faith,
My soul is full of ecstasy,
I dwell with joy on what he saith.

My tongue is loos'd to speak his fame,
And tell poor sinners all around,
That they with me may know his name,
And say, I've precious Jesus found.

SEPTEMBER 15.

Put off the old man. Eph. 4:22.

People who love money better than a good conscience, make nothing of putting off base and counterfeit coin. Christian, you may safely imitate them, in putting off the base old man. The more the love of Christ is in you, the more will you do it. (1st.) What is meant by this *old man*? Corrupt nature, which was born with you, is part of you, lives in you, and will never be dead so long as your body lives. Though near six thousand years old, yet he is very strong and vigorous at times. Yea, though you are a child of God, and a member of Christ, he wants to have the mastery over you. You could never have conquered him, had not Christ crucified him. Though crucified, you can never subdue him, but by the strength of Christ. Nor you cannot put him off but by the grace of Christ, for he clings and twines round you like a serpent; yet you are commanded to put him off. This is your duty from day to day. But it is not by your might, nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. (2d.) Why are you called upon to put him off? (1st.) Because all his reasonings are corrupt, his every suggestion is totally evil. He would corrupt the gospel, pervert its truths, reject its promises, and defy its threatenings. (2d.) All his lusts or desires are deceitful. He deceives by the pride of self-righteousness, as well as by gross sins. (3d.) He is an enemy to thy Lord, a supplanter of his glory, and a rival of thy faith in him, peace from it, and obedience to him. If you cherish him, you lose the comfort of your best Friend's presence. If you reason with him, you perplex your mind, and lose the simplicity of faith. If you follow his promise of liberty, you will

get into bondage. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." (Rom. 8:13.) (3d.) What is implied by putting off the old man? (1st.) That he always continues the same: he is never changed for the better. (2d.) That he always remains alive in you. But, (3d.) that you should put him down from his seat, and not suffer him to rule over you. Put him off in your thoughts, walk, and conversation, just as you would an old filthy garment; or like a troublesome, intruding old man, who would knock at your door, and want admittance to you. Put him off, with this reply, I have the blessed company of the new Man, Christ Jesus; there is no admittance for you. "I have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24.) Put off the old man, by humble faith and earnest prayer, ever remembering, I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me. Phil. 4:13.

Strange is the mystery of grace!
Tho' I'm a creature new,
Yet still I find thro' all my days,
The old man in me too.

Almighty King of saints,
My tyrant lusts subdue:
Expel the darkness of my mind,
And all my pow'rs renew.

SEPTEMBER 16.

Let the weak say, I am strong. Joel 3:10.

Where is the weak, doubting sinner? Stand forth, my soul, thy Lord arraigns thee; he judges and passes sentence of reproof upon thee. "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" (Matt. 14:31.) Your doubts come from your little faith: your doubts prevent the increase of faith. You can easily believe the Lord is displeased at your sins. What is sin, but disobeying his commands? But did you never consider it as a sin, a great sin, not to believe when he commands? Not to be obedient to his word, when he requires you to be strong in faith—"Strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus?" (2 Tim. 2:1.) "Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10.) O you do not enough attend to this! But you say, "I am so weak in myself." Who is not? He who thinks he is not, is the weakest of all in self-knowledge. The great, the strong, the inspired Paul, gives this challenge. "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. 11:29.) You are, in yourself, upon a level with Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all saints; and they were all alike upon a level with you, in point of self-weakness. Here is a command for you, *Let the weak say, I am strong.* Lo, I tell you of a great saint, a strong believer, who found himself so weak, that he took the prophet's advice, and adopted these very words. Would you wish to follow the example of a better saint than St. Paul? He says, "When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10.) This is a heavenly art. It is to be learned every day. Put it in practice this night. The Lord's glory is concerned in it. Thy comfort springs from it. Say, *am I weak* to strive against sin—to resist Satan—to overcome the

world—to deny himself—to follow Christ—to pray unto him—believe, and hope in him—cleave to him, and love him? etc. What then? I doubt he will cast me off; and suffer me to perish. Would you serve a weak member of your body, or treat a weak child of your loins so? Would you not rather live to strengthen it? So does your Lord. He says, *be strong* in the grace which is in me. My strength is yours; my life is yours; all I am and have, as God-Man and Mediator, is yours. Go out of weak self. Live by faith on me. Remember, even the renowned heroes of faith, they were not only weak, but *weakness* itself. “Yet out of *weakness*, they were made strong.” (Heb. 11:34.) O consider, you are engaged in a good cause, well provided with the best armour, and assured of perfect victory, by Jesus, the Captain of your salvation. Heb. 2:10.

Tho' weak as helpless infancy,
We daily feel we are,
Yet in the Lord our strength doth lie—
We are his past'ral care.

Lord, make us on thy strength rely,
And face each daring foe:
While looking unto thee as nigh,
We unto conq'ring go.

SEPTEMBER 17.

Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. Joshua 23:14.

Though fully assured of his near dissolution, yet with what calm composure doth Joshua utter these words! Though you are a sinner, and must fall under the sentence of death for sin, yet you need not be under bondage all your life time through fear of death. Why should you? Has not the sinner's Friend gained a complete and everlasting victory over death, the sinner's enemy? Consider, (1st.) what Christ hath done *for* us sinners. For sinners we are, and shall be, though redeemed by the blood, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. When the messenger of death kills the body, and calls the soul to glory, then honour thy Lord's work by the faith of thy heart. So fear and terror shall flee thy soul. (1st.) By his death, he has appeased divine Justice. As Jonah, his type, being cast into the sea, quelled the storm; so Christ, being cast into the furnace of divine wrath, quenched the flames. God is just, while he justifies ungodly sinners who believe in Jesus. (Rom. 3:26.) (2d.) He hath silenced all the accusations of the law. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. (Gal. 3:13.) (3d.) Upon this, follows the removal of guilt. "He took away our sins by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.) "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins." (Eph. 1:7.) "He has wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness for us: we are made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) (5th.) "He hath conquered Satan: by his death, he hath destroyed him who had the power of

death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2:14.) (6th.) "He hath opened heaven to us. We have lost a paradise by sin. We gain heaven by the cross of Christ. It is our purchased possession." (Eph. 1:14.) Lastly, He hath obtained a victory over sin and death, so that we may joyfully cry out, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57.) Now, if Christ has appeased justice, silenced the law, taken away the guilt of sin, is made righteousness to us, conquered Satan, opened heaven, overcome death, and obtained victory for us, what have we to fear? Why should we not triumph in the views of death? We cannot without (2d.) the work of the *Spirit* in us. But if he has made the work of Christ glorious in our eyes; if he has given us to see our need of it: to believe in, and rely upon Christ's life and death as our title to heaven and glory: by the faith of this, he hath sanctified our souls, as vessels of honour, to the glory of Christ. It is our privilege to rejoice in him: to look upon his victories as our own; to triumph over every enemy, and death, as the last enemy. For though he is an enemy to the flesh, he is the best friend to the soul.

Prepare us, Lord, for thy right hand—
Then come the joyful day:
Come death, and some celestial band,
To bear our souls away.

SEPTEMBER 18.

We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5:7.

Thus we quit sense for faith. So we overcome the lust of the eyes. To gratify these, is contrary to the walk of faith. Then is it any marvel, that we lose the peace, comfort, and joy of faith? But this is not what is here meant by sight, as opposed to faith. Here is an infallible truth. Though a Christian, by the eye of sense, can neither see God, Christ, the things of the heavenly world, etc. yet he walks in the firm belief of what the word of God tells him of them: and hence, they have the supreme affection of the soul, from day to day. Faith supplies the sight of them. They are as real to the mind, as though seen by the bodily eye. Thus, a lively hope of enjoying them, is kept up in the heart. "We are always confident," we are sure of the existence of spiritual, heavenly, and invisible objects, as we are of our own being. O ye sons of carnal sight and sense! ye deride us: we pity you. Ye look only at temporal shadows: we, at eternal substance. "The things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18.) See the preciousness of faith. For, (1st.) though we do not now, nor ever have seen Christ, yet we love him: believing in him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. (1 Pet. 1:8.) For, (2d.) we see in ourselves nothing but sin and misery. But by faith, we know we are perfectly righteous in Christ—perfectly accepted of God—perfectly justified in his sight—presented without spot of sin. (3d.) We see our bodies under the sentence of death—daily dying—hastening to the grave. Natural sight can look no further. There we see an end of our existence. The body turns to dust. But by faith we look

through death and the grave: we see, and say, "We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1.) (4th.) Though we do not see how, nor can we explain the manner of the Spirit's work upon our souls, no more than we can tell from whence the wind cometh, or whither it goeth; yet by sweet experience we can say, "He who wrought us for this self-same thing, is the Spirit of God." (verse 5.) For we find ourselves formed, to live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us. (Gal. 2:20.) Hence, we are dead to the pleasures of sense, and the joys of carnal mirth. For, we see Jesus at the right hand of God, where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Psa. 16:11.

Blest be our Lord, who gave us faith
Things out of sight to see;
To live and walk by what he saith,
May this our glory be.

Keep up this quick and piercing sight,
Dear Lord, of things above:
That we may walk with thee in light,
Rejoicing in thy love.

SEPTEMBER 19.

With clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to shine, by the cloud that cometh betwixt. Job 36:32.

The sun, from its first formation by its almighty Creator, shines at all times alike. There never was, is, or ever can be, any addition to, or diminution from, its light and heat. But we perceive a sensible difference. Even the intervention of a cloud coming between us and the sun, hides and obscures the glorious rays of light from us. There are fixed laws in creation. All nature acts under the direction of those laws, prescribed by our all-wise Lord. As in nature, so in grace. As by the natural sun, so it is by the Sun of Righteousness: it shines with an equal degree of resplendent glory, of light, love, and grace at all times. But, we are not always alike sensible of it. Why not? As clouds and vapours arise from the earth, and interrupt the light of the natural sun, by coming between that and us; just so, the clouds of sin, the vapours of corruption, the thick fog of unbelief, which arise from our earthly carnal nature, come between us and the glorious Sun of Righteousness—so its light is obscured, its heat interposed, and its comforts prevented. Then our hearts are distressed, and our spirits dejected. The Lord hides his face, and we are troubled. Isaiah gives a very striking account of this: “The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.” (13:10.) Hast thou not known somewhat of such a day of darkness and distress? My soul has mourned on account of it. But, methinks, I have found it sweet in experience, when Satan, or

an unkind enemy, hath tried and strove to raise a dust, and bring a cloud over my mind—but all in vain. It is true, they have disturbed and perplexed; but they could bring nothing between the soul and Jesus, our glorious Sun of Righteousness. They have agitated the air, they have tried their efforts upon nature, but could raise no cloud of sin, no vapour of corruption. Jesus shone without a cloud. No intervening obscurity darkened the views of him. Then, love reflected its strong and powerful rays: then, it was sweet. Well, a few more cloudy and sun-shiny days, and we shall be at home. But we have always this precious promise to support us. "Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Mal. 4:2.

Without thy light and love,
Dear Lord, what is this life?
Thy precious beams dart from above,
Or all is pain and strife.

Let no preventing cloud
Obscure thy glorious face:
Leave not my soul in darkness bow'd ,
Thou Sun of righteousness.

SEPTEMBER 20.

Give us this day our daily bread. Matt. 6:11.

Happiness, that inestimable jewel, springs only from content. Christian content is founded in humility. The humble Christian lives upon the fulness of God. Thence he seeks all his supplies. Our Lord not only teaches his disciples the words of prayer, which any one may use, but also gives the Spirit of prayer, which is peculiar to disciples only. This consists, (1st.) in knowing our wants. (2d.) In seeking a supply of them from the Lord. *Give us* (3d.) *this day*: just from hand to mouth: *daily bread*, all the blessings of providence and grace, needful for us, as men and Christians. (1st.) Do we know our own wants? The sight and sense of these will make and keep us very low and humble in our own eyes; for we shall go out of ourselves, and live out of ourselves. Do we want daily bread to support our bodies? Have we no source of life in ourselves, but what must be fed and nourished from the food we receive from day to day? Just so it is with our souls. Christ saith, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:48.) We have no inherent stock of spiritual food in ourselves. The man who thinks so, is as foolish as he would be, who should say, he has a supply within himself for natural food; he needs not pray for it. (2d.) Do we seek supply from our Lord? He says, "Blessed are they who hunger." (Matt. 5:6.) Their blessedness consists, in coming empty to him, to be filled. *Give us*. Dear Lord, I am just the same hopeless, helpless, miserable sinner in myself, as I was when I first heard of thee, and came unto thee. (3d.) Give me this day my daily bread: thy flesh to eat, and thy blood to drink. Thy flesh is meat indeed; thy blood is drink

indeed. (John 6:55.) Lord, thou hast said, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (verse 57.) O that, in feeding on thee by faith, I may know that I have eternal life, and that thou wilt raise me up at the last day. This feeding is far more preferable than disputing. True, we are exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith. But then it should be with a desire that our own souls, and the souls of others, may be edified, fed, and nourished, by the faith of Jesus; else, it is but vain jangling. Who would not contend for his natural food? How jealous, how watchful should we be against every enemy, who would prevent our comfortable feeding upon Christ, the bread of life! The more we feed upon this bread, the less appetite we have to the pleasures of this world, and the vanities of sense. Our spiritual food transforms us into the image of our Lord, and causes us to aspire after him, and long to be with him. Precious promise! "Jesus shall feed his flock like a shepherd." Isa. 40:11.

Jesus, who art the bread of life,
O feed our souls this day!
And grant us to grow strong in thee,
To run the heav'nly way.

SEPTEMBER 21.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

Most precious truth for guilty sinners! Lord, help us most deeply to consider what is implied in these words. (1st.) See the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It has brought these dreadful evils upon us. 1st. Loss of God's image. 2d. Obnoxiousness to his wrath. 3d. Rejection from his presence. For we are by sin totally unclean. The pollution of sin has brought the curse of God's law upon us, armed his justice, shut his kingdom against us, and opened the gates of hell to us. The bitter cries and exquisite torments of the damned in hell, will eternally proclaim the malignancy of sin. The everlasting songs of the saints in glory, will for ever proclaim the praises of the Lamb, who washed them from their sins in his own blood. (2d.) This proves the curse and defilement of sin. The blood of Jesus Christ, and that alone, cleanseth from all its deepest stains. O the infinite love of the Son of God, to shed his blood for guilty sinners! O the infinite virtue of his precious blood, to cleanse us from all sin! Remember, God's justice would have been eternally glorified, and thy soul eternally suffering his wrath due to thy sins, if the blood of his Son had not cleansed thee from all sin. Reflect on this, and say, canst thou think light of sin, or count the blood of Jesus of little value? O, see sin's crimson dye, in the purple gore of the Son of God, which was shed to atone for it, and cleanse from it. (3d.) "Cleanseth us." Not only hath cleansed and shall cleanse, but it continually doth so. It removes all the filth of sin from before God, and takes all the guilt of sin out of our consciences: so that we are

perfectly clean, and without spot of sin in God's sight, and perfectly freed from all condemnation for sin in our consciences. (4th.) "The blood of Jesus Christ." This means the last act of the tragedy of the life of our anointed Saviour. His blood being the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption, and the expiation of our sins. (5th.) "His Son:" the Son of God: very God of very God. Here let faith fix, and conscience be satisfied. Not only the blood of the Son of the Virgin, but it is the blood of the Son of God. Neither the greatness, nor the number of sins can remain in their guilt, nor expose any sinner to wrath, who believes in the Son of God. No guilt so great, but it can cleanse: no stain so deep but it can purge. Unbelief shuts blood out of the conscience. By faith we receive its cleansing virtue and peaceful effects on the soul.

Thy blood alone, Jehovah Man,
Doth cleanse our souls from guilt of sin;
This precious truth we'd ever scan,
For peace, and love, and joy within.

Come, let us sing, adore, and praise,
Ye sinners, who are foul as me,
The dying love, the precious grace,
Of Jesu's suff'rings on the tree.

SEPTEMBER 22.

If ye do these things, ye shall never fall. 2 Pet. 1:10.

What things? add to your faith every Christian grace and good work. If ye live in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, ye shall never fall. But it is here plainly implied, if ye do not these things, ye certainly will fall. How fall? Into all manner of sin; yea, and into hell too, if the Lord Christ keep you not. But he most assuredly will keep all his sheep from thus falling. For he hath said, they shall never perish—I give unto them eternal life. But what evidence can any one have that he is Christ's sheep, if he do not hear his voice, and obey his word? My dear fellow-sinner, deceive not thy own soul. Beware of corrupt notions, and unscriptural ideas. It is most true, salvation is sure. Every one who believes in Christ shall most assuredly be saved. But surely there is such a thing, as living and walking close with Christ—cleaving to him with full purpose of heart, cheerfully obeying him in love, and studying to glorify him in righteousness and true holiness. And there is such a thing also, as falling away from this lively exercise of grace, this firm stedfastness in the faith of Christ, and this warm love to Christ. Hence, great dishonour is brought upon the Lord—great grief to his dear disciples, and great darkness and distress upon the souls of such professors. Is it not to be dreaded, to have Christ withdraw himself? to have guilt, and fear, and terror, let loose upon thy conscience, while the enemy is saying, where is now thy God, thy Saviour, thy salvation? Peter thus fell: David thus fell: saints, in all ages, have thus fallen. They have told us, and the sinner who writes these words can tell thee, somewhat of the gall and

wormwood of this falling. Are you ready to say, this is very legal and very terrifying? Not *legal*. For this text is an evangelical exhortation. Much of the preciousness of gospel salvation lies in it. It is a mean to keep from falling: it is a spur to final perseverance. As to *terror*: take warning by the assertion, and thou hast nothing to dread from the circumstance. Absolute declarations of salvation are to strengthen the faith, and comfort the hearts of God's people. Precious promises support them. Suitable exhortations quicken their diligence. Assertions of their danger of falling, are to convince them of their weakness—excite their cry unto the Lord—and cause them to walk close with Him, "who is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

In Christ I stand, by faith I work,
My God will me uphold:
But if I'm careless in my walk,
I soon shall leave the fold.

Fresh unction from thyself, dear Lord,
Pour out upon my heart;
Make me take heed unto thy word,
Lest conscience feel the smart.

SEPTEMBER 23.

And he said unto them, what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?
Luke 24:17.

Time is the best medicine for most diseases, whether of body or mind. A present hour my cause sadness, the next may bring joy. This is a living comfort in saddest seasons, Christ knows both our sorrows and the cause of them. He is always near to us, though we see him not. His sympathising spirit manifests itself in this question. Observe, (1st.) Here were two disciples communing together, and reasoning with one another. This is right, it is pleasing to our Lord, to see his dear members converse with him, and strive to edify each other in the faith of him—and that they bear each other's burdens. For, (2d.) Jesus joined company with them. Disciple, how often have you found it so? Christ delights in the fellowship of his saints. "How can one be warm alone?" Eccles. 4:11. (3d.) Christ inquires what is the subject of their conversation, and the cause of their sadness. Disciples of Christ have their sad seasons. It is good that they should converse freely, with one another about them. But whence do they spring? Chiefly from unbelief. The souls of these disciples were sad. Why? They did not believe the Lord was risen. But ah! there was another reason for sadness. They had basely forsaken, and cowardly deserted him. This also arose from the same cause, unbelief. Well, notwithstanding all this, see the free grace of Christ! (4th.) He follows them, though they forsake him. He owns them, though they denied him. He cares for them, though they shewed no care for him. He

comes to comfort them, though they had grieved him. Says the Prince of peace, "Why are ye sad?" Then they opened their minds to him. They told him of the ray of hope, and the gleam of confidence which they possessed. *We trusted*, etc. But delays produced doubt. This is the third day, etc. (ver. 21.) What was the consequence? (1st.) Christ chides them for their unbelief. (2d.) Expounds the Scripture to them. (3d.) Causes their hearts to burn within them. O Christians, though you are perplexed in your mind, walk and are sad, yet forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. Expect and pray for your Lord's presence. This, like the rising sun, will scatter the clouds of doubt, fear and sadness, which hang over your mind. Remember with the confidence of faith, and the joy of hope, your Lord's precious promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.

O Jesu, in my saddest hours
Help me to look to thee:
And call up all my thinking pow'rs,
Of what thou art to *me*.

When lost to God and dead in sin,
Thy love sought after *me*:
Tho' sav'd, I've flesh and sin within,
My joy is all in thee.

SEPTEMBER 24.

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.
2 Cor. 12:7.

I dearly love St. Paul's experience. For there is so much of the artless simplicity of the poor humble sinner; such a dread of self-glorying, while it ever exalts the rich grace of the dear Saviour. Let us make a few remarks on it, and pray our gracious Lord to bless them. (1st.) Here is a painful experience, a thorn in his flesh. What was that? Fanciful men have entertained strange ideas. Some have said the cholic: others the ear-ache, others the head-ache, etc. If it were a bodily pain, we might as well guess, the gout in his great toe. But would the apostle have been thus anxious to have a bodily pain removed? Would the most excruciating pain prevent soul exalting? Surely it was something more. It was the heart-ack. He plainly tells it was, "the messenger of Satan to buffet him." His very soul was harassed and sore distressed, by some violent temptation, injection, or suggestion from the devil: either concerning his own state, or the truth as it is in Jesus. This was teasing, painful, and tormenting to him, as a thorn in the flesh. This brought him to a proper feeling of himself, after his abundant revelations. He found that he was the subject of corruption like another sinner. He had the irksome feeling of the "flesh," in which, he says, "dwelleth no good thing," (Rom. 7:18.) He could not say as his Lord once said, "Satan cometh and hath nothing in me," (John 14:30.) For he found in him an evil and corrupt nature to work upon. Therefore he buffeted him from day to

day. If you experience somewhat of this, be not dejected. Call not your state in question. Resist Satan, and cry to your Lord. For know with St. Paul, (2d.) "It was given to me." The Lord, for wise and good ends, in love to our souls, permits these buffetings. Satan thinks to destroy us, but the Lord hereby profits us. He suffers his dearest children and holiest saints to be vexed by Satan, and all kinds of temptations. To what end? (3d.) "Lest I should be exalted above measure." Could not so holy a saint as Paul, be favoured with rich experience of heavenly visions, without danger of being puffed up with pride by them? See hence, O believer, your danger. These pungent feelings bring us down from our altitudes into the valley of humility. Then (4th.) prize the throne of grace. Flee to your precious Lord as St. Paul did. Lay all your distress before him. (5th.) Remember the precious answer he obtained from Christ, "My grace is sufficient for thee." As though he had said, you are not to live upon your self-exalting frames and feelings; but as a poor sinner, upon the all-sufficient grace of *me*, your precious Saviour. Thus self was laid low, and the Lord alone exalted in that day. Isa. 2:11.

SEPTEMBER 25.

For when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Cor. 12:10.

We have read of St. Paul's revelations, exaltings, buffetings, and his praying: now of his humbling sight of himself. He is brought down to his right place, low in self; and to his right feelings, weak in self. Hence we see the true nature and blessed end of Christian experience. It keeps the soul from being puffed up with pride, lest it fall into the condemnation of the devil. It sinks it low in humility: under a sense of weakness; and it leads out of self, to look for all its strength in Christ. Here the strength of faith is opposed to the weakness of sense. When I am sensibly weak, then I am believably strong. This, though a difficult lesson, yet is a precious one. (1st.) Do we see ourselves weak? Christ is held forth to us as our strength, and he calls upon us to be strong in him. "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," (Isa. 26:4.) But surely, folly is bound up in the heart of the weak. For instead of obeying, and trusting in him, how many are saying, I am the weakest of the weak? I have no might, no power? You are the very person here addressed. You can get no strength but from the Lord. By trusting in the Lord, you will say, though weak, I am strong: I have everlasting strength. Again, (2d.) To encourage to this, the Lord commands, "let the weak say, I am strong," (Joel 3:10.) Let them believe it in their hearts, and confess it with their lips. What! if they find no strength in themselves? Yes; it is a command to the weak: yea, to the weakest of the weak. Then this exactly suits you and me. Here again, (3d.) "hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting

God, the Lord, giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might, he increaseth strength," (Isa. 40:28, 29.) Here we are rebuked and reprov'd. Faint, and have no might: this is our state. Have you never heard, nor known, how the Lord dealeth with such! O look up to him. Though not sufficient of yourself to do any thing as of yourself, know your sufficiency is of the Lord. Though we can do nothing of ourselves, yet we can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us, (Phil. 4:13.) How do we obtain strength from Christ? By believing his promises: going to him in the faith of them, pleading them before him, and praying him to fulfil them in us. Thus we put our cause upon the strength of Christ's truth. He is faithful. He cannot deny us. He will say, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Matt. 9:29.

When frames are warm & comforts strong,
O then we're mighty great!
Self is the hero of our song,
Our weakness we forget.

Then Jesus sends some humbling stroke,
In love, to mar our pride;
That we may glory of his work,
And trust in nought beside.

SEPTEMBER 26.

Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. John 20:20.

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun," (Eccles. 11:7.) But, O how much more sweet and pleasant, to see the light, and behold the glory of *the Sun of Righteousness!* This inspires the heart with gladness. These disciples had lost their dear Lord, and mourned in darkness for his absence. Tongue cannot tell their inexpressible joy, at seeing him again. Their sight was by the eye of sense: ours is by the eye of faith. Yet our sight is not less real than theirs: and it brings the same gladness to our hearts also. Therefore it is highly prized by us. For we can neither live comfortably, walk holily, nor die happily, without seeing the Lord Christ. For, (1st.) A sight of Christ by faith, brings peace to the conscience. There is ever a war within, between the flesh and the spirit: grace and nature: the old man and the new. The motion of sin in our members is ever warring against the law of holiness in our minds. Wicked nature is like the troubled sea which cannot rest. It is continually casting up mire and dirt. But the winds and waves of corrupt nature obey Christ. He says, peace, be still, and there is a great calm in the soul. For Christ is our peace. He hath made our peace with God by his blood. He makes and keeps peace in our souls by his presence. Our stubborn lusts will fight and reign, if Christ be absent from our hearts. Therefore we cannot but be glad when we see the Lord. (2d.) The sight of him quells our doubts, and dispels our fears. Our poor hearts, seeing sin and all manner of evil dwelling in us,

are ready to fear and doubt, whether we are the children of God, or not. But, O when we see the Saviour by faith, our consciences are satisfied: our minds are divinely assured, that Christ hath redeemed us to God by his blood: for we cry out, this is our beloved and our friend, in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins. We believe and are sure he is the Christ of God, the Saviour of sinners. (3d.) The sight of the Lord gives victory over death: opens the kingdom of heaven to our view, and gives us to see a smiling God and Father, ready to receive and embrace us. O most joyful sight! If so, O Christian, beware, beware of gratifying your sight with any vain, sinful, and carnal pleasures. These will draw away your sight, and take off the attention of your minds from looking unto Jesus, and prevent your gladness of heart, and joy of soul in, and from him. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." Psalm 119:37.

A sight of thee, my Saviour dear,
Makes glad my mournful heart,
Expels my doubts, brings heaven near,
And sensual joys depart.

Repeat thy visits o'er and o'er,
While in this vale I dwell,
That I may view thee ev'ry hour,
Who sav'd my soul from hell.

SEPTEMBER 27.

I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. Rom. 7:18.

This is the knowledge which puffeth not up; but like love, edifieth the soul in deep humility: while it excites overflowing gratitude in the heart to Christ for his righteousness, to justify vile sinners. It is the knowledge of regenerate souls. *I know:* not only doctrinally, in notion and theory, but it is a confirmed truth, by heart-felt experience. I know it from day to day: I have proved it again and again: I am fully assured of it, as I am of my own existence, "that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." St. Paul's judgment of himself was confirmed by experience. "But was he not a most eminent apostle, and holy saint? Yes; still he confesses publicly before God, angels, and men, that he was the subject of a nature, which was earthly, sensual, and devilish. If no good thing dwelt in his flesh, is it not implied, that every evil dwelt there? Doubtless, he would be so understood. Were evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, blasphemies, etc. in the flesh of this holy saint? Yes; his knowledge of the total corruption of his fallen nature, agrees with his Lord's doctrine, (Matt. 15:19.) He had been a murderer and blasphemer by practice. Then he was in a state of ignorance and unbelief. But now he was regenerated, his state changed, and his practice altered, therefore, surely his flesh could not be so bad. Yes, it was, just the same; the flesh—the old man—the corrupt fallen nature is, and ever will be the same, in the regenerate: "It ever lusts against the Spirit," (Gal. 5:17.) Why is this woeful experience of the apostle left upon record? For our profit. (1st.) That we may

judge and try our own by it. If we are taught by the same Spirit, we shall have the same humbling views of our flesh, which is not worse than Paul's nor was his one whit better than ours. If we are left in nature's pride, we shall join the ignorant cry of those who say, "all who are convinced of sin, greatly undervalue themselves." (2d.) Not to be cast down with despondency, nor to give way to despairing thoughts, though we find every evil, and nothing but evil in our flesh. For this cures us of all self-confidence. This we are prone to: but this opposes the faith of the gospel. (3d.) Look out, and go entirely out of yourself: look wholly to, and trust entirely in the Lord Jesus and his righteousness, that though you have no confidence in the flesh, you may ever rejoice in him. This is the character and conduct of true believers, (Phil. 3:3.) (4th.) Adore the Holy Spirit, who when you had no goodness to deserve it, no meetness to qualify for it, but all in you to oppose it, gave you a birth into Christ, in whom you have every spiritual good. Therefore, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," Gal. 5:16.

Great God, assist me thro' the fight:
Make me triumphant in thy might.
Thou the desponding heart canst raise;
The victory thine, and thine the praise.

SEPTEMBER 28.

If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. Rom. 8:10.

St. Paul was an experimental teacher. He applies himself to the heart. He appeals to the conscience. He aims to quicken and animate the soul, and to draw out the affections to Christ, from what it had inwardly experienced of divine grace. O Christians, let this be your study when you meet and talk together. Yea, often do as David did. Converse freely with your own soul. *If Christ be in you.* That is, if he dwell in your heart by faith. If you have an inward approbation of him, delight in him, and love to him in your heart: if you believe in him as the Son of God, anointed by the Holy Ghost, to be the only Redeemer, Justifier, and Saviour of perishing sinners—what then? I will tell you, says the apostle, what will be the experience of your heart. (1st.) “The body is dead because of sin.” You will find, and groan under the weight of a dead body, when in your most solemn duties: yea, and in your best frames too, you will find its deadness, and feel its pressure. So that, as one says, a Christian is often weary *in*, though never weary *of* serving God. Because of sin, the body is dead to all spiritual delights. It has no relish but for carnal joys and earthly pleasures. It is under the sentence of the law of death, because of sin. No good thing dwells in the flesh. Expect none from it. Be content to leave it dead to spiritual purposes, as you found it. Do not gratify, but mortify it. Be not discouraged under this irksome sense and feeling. Rejoice, it is from experience, (2d.) That “the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.” Sin, and the loss of righteousness,

brought death upon body and soul. A sinless man, with perfect righteousness, restores life to the soul. Some talk of their own righteousness, and the work of the Spirit upon the soul, and yet deny the obedience and righteousness of Christ's life *for us*. This is contrary to the faith of the gospel. We find our souls alive to God, we own it is by the Spirit of God, because of the righteousness of the Son of God. Therefore we live by his righteousness, live upon him, and live to him, who wrought it for us. This is the life of the soul: the life of faith. O what a special mercy for the soul to be alive to God! O what joy, under a sense of all deadness, dejections, short comings, imperfections, etc. to have the perfectly glorious righteousness of Christ to plead before God! For though we are not righteous in ourselves, yet, "Christ of God is made unto us righteousness." 1 Cor. 1:30.

What tho' we find the body dead,
Under the curse of law:
We're righteous in our living head,
And hope to see his face.

Christ in us lives by precious faith,
The life of every grace:
We feast with joy on what he saith,
And hope to see his face.

SEPTEMBER 29.

We are perplexed, but not in despair. 2 Cor. 4:8.

God's dear children have not all the same clear perception of truth. They are not all of one mind and the same sentiment in all points. Yet, they all have but one Lord, one faith, and one hope. And, there is an uniformity in their experience, with respect to the exceeding sinfulness of sin—the depravity of their nature—their perplexities from the world, the flesh, and the devil—their love of the scriptures—and the exceeding preciousness of Christ. This proves that they are taught by and with the same Spirit. We have perplexities of a spiritual nature, beside those in common with others, which natural men are total strangers to. These are no weak evidences of our spiritual birth. To be perplexed with a body of sin and death—with a sense of unbelief—with deadness, formality, wanderings in spiritual duties—with Satan's temptations, injections, accusations—corrupt reasonings, and carnal pleadings: the feeling all these makes it manifest, that the soul is born of God, and alive to God. For when dead in sin, we felt nothing of them. How exceedingly absurd, and foolish then, do many act, because thus perplexed. O they are ready to give up hope, cast away confidence, and deny they are God's children. But their sense of these things, and groaning under them, are evident tokens of salvation. "Perplexed, but not in despair." O take heed of giving the least way to despair: Of desponding: Of letting go your confidence in Christ: Of giving up for one moment, the least degree of hope in him. For, consider the evil of this. (1st.) You hereby slight the everlasting love of God the Father to sinners. (2d.) You

dishonour the work and salvation of the Son of God for sinners. (3d.) You grieve the Holy Spirit, the *Comforter* of sinners. (4th.) You disregard the gospel of grace, glad tidings to sinners; and set at nought all God's precious promises in Christ unto sinners. (5th.) You give the enemy all possible advantage over you. He stands, and cries, "There, there, so would I have it." (6th.) You give sin all its strength against you. (7th.) You perplex, distress, and darken your own soul, whereby you are hindered from running the way of God's commands with love and delight. A thousand evils are connected with indulging despondence. Away then with all false humility. It is devilish. Hold fast this faithful saying, "for it is worthy of all acceptation, at all times, under all circumstances, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. 1:15. Till the devil can blot that truth out of God's word, or make you any worse than a sinner; you, as a quickened sinner, have the same reason as St. Paul, or any other apostle, to say, *I am always confident.*" 2 Cor. 5:6.

Jesus our soul's delightful choice,
In thee believing we rejoice;
Yet still our joy is mix'd with grief,
While faith contends with unbelief.

SEPTEMBER 30.

I am like a green fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found. Hosea 14:8.

Here is a sweet dialogue between the Lord and Ephraim, which signifies growing. The Lord had just before said, "I will be as dew upon my people." See the effects of this grace, Ephraim says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Now I find my Lord and his love in my heart, get hence ye cursed idols: my vile lusts and that vain idol, the work of my hands, my own righteousness. I abhor the former. I trample on the latter. I bemoan my folly in taking up with them so long. The Lord graciously answers, "I have heard him:" his moans and complaints. "And observed him," with complacency and delight returning to me. O ever gracious, long-suffering, loving friend of sinners! "I am like a green fir-tree." Who says this? Commentators say, Christ. But I would rather humbly presume, than boldly assert, that they are the words of the believer. For thus the dialogue is kept up. Naturalists say, the fir-tree is of itself unfruitful. If so, we may suppose the believer saying to his Lord, I find my soul is alive. I do grow. I am a tree of righteousness of thy planting, and thou mayest be glorified. (Isa. 61:3.) But, I am like a green fir-tree. I bear leaves. I can bring forth no fruit of myself. I long to be fruitful to thy glory. To which Christ replies, "*From me* is thy fruit found." O we can never be too often reminded of this! For it beats down pride: It keeps us humble before, dependent upon, and grateful to our dear Lord. (1st.) Christ hath brought forth all rich fruit to us, to comfort us: adoption to ennoble us: righteousness to justify us: blood to cleanse us: holiness

to sanctify us: and heaven to glorify us. (2d.) All the graces of the Spirit *in* us: faith to come to and abide in him: love to delight our souls in him: hope to expect from him, etc. (3d.) All our fruits of righteousness are from him. Being married to him, we bring forth fruit unto God. (Rom. 7:4.) All our fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil. 1:11.) O then it shall be our chief, our constant concern, to keep our faith in lively exercise upon Christ, that we may have a clear sight of our union to him, and a happy sense of communion with him. Out of his fulness we receive all supply. Remember this criterion of thy Lord, O that it may quicken our diligence, influence our conduct, and animate our zeal in the way of holiness. "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" Matt. 7:20.

All my salvation is in Christ;
From him are all my fruits;
All other notions I resist,
Which sinful nature suits.

Hence I by faith on Christ will live,
That Christ may live in me;
So ev'ry grace shall spring and thrive,
And I not barren be.

OCTOBER 1.

But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
Heb. 4:15.

O, says a soul in heaviness, through manifold temptations, surely no one was ever tempted and tried as I am: St. Paul answers to the contrary. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to men," (1 Cor. 10:13.) Is this any relief and support to you? If not, consider the text. (1st.) Temptation was common to Christ as man. He was tempted in all points like as we are. View him beset by Satan. See the hellish arts he practised upon him. He tempted him to the lust of the eye—to self-murder—to idolatry—to distrust God—to tempt God—yea, in *all* points, like as we are. You cannot feel a trial or temptation, but what Christ felt before you. Though he had no sin in his nature for Satan to work upon, yet, he doubtless felt all the assaults, which the power and malice of hell could attack him with, yet without sin. Therefore, temptations are not sin. (2d.) Though as God, Christ knew all things intuitively, yet he could only as a man have a feeling, experimental sense of the nature and power of temptations. (3d.) This is very comfortable to his tried, tempted members. For he is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." "Being tempted himself, he is able to succour them when are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.) O think of this under all your temptations and trials. What! did Christ feel all that I feel before him, and for me? Had he the most lively sense and pungent feelings of temptation? And was all to this end, that he might be able to succour me? Think, O my soul, thy crowned Head in glory feels for all his tempted members on

earth. Consider Jesus, once a MAN as thou art, and now, as seeing thy distressed, panting heart, and labouring breast, bowed down with one temptation after another. Methinks I hear him say, Thus it was with me, when in the flesh. My heart yearns, my bowels move with tender compassion, to that my brother, in flesh. I am touched with a tender sympathy for him. Is it so? Then do not keep the devil's secrets. Does he tempt thee from day to day, with some vile, filthy, cursed lust? Go and lay all in thine heart open to the Lord. Be neither afraid nor ashamed. Christ knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same. Confess the vile, abominable, hellish lusts, and corruptions of thy nature. Remember, ever remember, Christ's blood is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Zech. 13:1.

 Temptations black beset my soul,
 And often make me start:
 How can this be, if grace control,
 That I should feel such smart?

 My soul, be not dismay'd at this,
 Thy Lord did feel the same:
 Satan doth strive to mar thy peace,
 But Christ hath conquer'd him.

OCTOBER 2.

He wist not that the LORD was departed from him. Judges 16:20.

What do I read? Sampson's name enrolled in the list of the ancient heroes of faith? Heb. 11:32. What! he who loved a harlot, and was so blinded by his lust, as to bring on himself the most dreadful evils, even unto death? Yes. Grace reigned then. It reigns still, through the righteousness of Christ unto sinners. What! That they should continue in sin, because grace abounds? God forbid! See the most awful evils it brought upon this man of God. Behold in him how sin blinds the eyes, hardens the heart, and stupefies the conscience. Think of this, and tremble at the first approach of sin and lust. (1st.) Sampson's lust to a vile, unchaste woman, had so blinded his reason, that he put his life into her hands three times. Yet he could not see that she had no regard for him, but only wanted to destroy him. Here was a judgment upon his sinful passions. The Philistines put out his eyes. (2d.) As he was fettered by his sin, a slave to his inordinate concupiscence, and did the devil's drudgery; the Philistines fettered him, put him into the prison-house, and there made him grind. (3d.) The Lord, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin, added this judgment to the others, he departed from him. But Sampson knew it not. Hence, observe, (1st.) That God doth not wink and connive at sin in his people; but he will most assuredly punish them for it. (2d.) That the Lord may depart from a soul, and he not be immediately sensible of it. But when, like Sampson, he awakes out of his sleep, and says, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake

myself," O alas! he finds his spiritual power and strength gone. No sweet communion with his dear Lord as heretofore. No precious assistance from his Spirit. No inward testimonies of his love, and gentle whispers of peace to his soul. He prays, but it is with the lips only. The power of prayer is departed from the heart. He goes from ordinance to ordinance, but he finds not his Lord in them. All is dry formality, dreary and uncomfortable. But, O joyful! Sampson's locks began to grow again. The Spirit of the Lord returned to him once more. He prays "O Lord God, remember me and strengthen me, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes." "Lord remember me," was the thief's prayer on the cross. Never forget the gracious answer. If you can but find a heart to pray to Jesus, to be revenged upon your cursed lusts, he saith, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding," Jer. 3:22.

The Lord still waits to shew his grace,
And save returning souls from hell:
Tho' we offend him to his face,
God's love in Christ's immutable.

'Tis this revives the dying spark
Of hope in a poor sinner's heart,
Turns him from sin's most cursed work
To Jesus, for his promis'd rest.

OCTOBER 3.

Behold! I have erred exceedingly. 1 Sam. 26:21.

I have selected this text for a peculiar purpose. At the close of the meditation, [I] shall assign the reason. In this chapter, we have an account of the heroic act of David's faith in the Lord, his invincible courage, and his amazing tenderness towards Saul, his enraged enemy, by which he melted his heart, and overcame his cruel wrath. Let us view his conduct, and pray for grace to improve from it. (1st.) View his faith. Here was Saul, with three thousand chosen men, in pursuit of David, thirsting for his blood. They were at a very small distance from him. Behold, David proposes to go to Saul's camp in the dead of the night, and asks, "Who will go down with me?" Does not this seem to the eye of carnal reason, to be a most rash and dangerous attempt? Though it were at midnight—though they might be fallen into a deep sleep—yet out of such a number of men, one, or more might awake, and seize on David. Surely, it was going into the very jaws of death. But David's faith surmounted his fears. His trust in his God rose superior to every carnal suggestion. O precious gift, of precious faith! Precious Lord, increase it in our souls. Abishai consents to go with him. They pass the king's life-guards: Come into Saul's camp. For behold, they were all like dead men. David and Abishai converse together: not a man hears or stirs. Why was this? How can we account for it? Why? "because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them." O my soul, learn courage from hence. When Giant Despair (as related in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress) attempted to pursue the pilgrim, he was seized with his fits. All thy enemies are

under thy Lord's power. He can cast all into a deep sleep, or into the long sleep of death. And he will, sooner than thou shalt perish by them. Up faith. Down sense. Away with all carnal reasoning.

March on, nor fear to win the day,
Tho' death and hell obstruct the way.

Now, (2d.) See, how David's faith wrought by his works. When they had gotten safe into the camp, Saul lay sleeping, and his spear stuck into the ground at his head. Now for a strong temptation. Abishai said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hands this day; let me smite him, I pray thee, with this spear to the earth at once, I will not smite him a second time." See this specious reasoning. (1st.) He begins with God, who had delivered Saul into David's hands. (2d.) Here was a fair opportunity, to revenge himself of his cruel enemy, and put an end to his troubles. And, (3d.) He promises to do it effectually, at a stroke. Now, who but a man after God's own heart, could have withstood this? but David had a better way to kill his rage, and save his life. Here see an heroic act of faith working by love, and producing an unshaken obedience to God. He durst not stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. See how conspicuous the grace of God shines in this Old Testament saint. O blush ye, who make David's faith as nothing, compared to the faith of a New-Testament believer! (3d.) See the effects of David's conduct. He carried away Saul's spear and cruse from under his head, and upbraids the captain of his host, for not watching over his royal master. Saul hears of the affair, and cries out, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" Struck with

David's fine reasoning: melted down at his noble, generous conduct; and doubtless recollecting, this was the second time his life was in David's hands, when he cut off the skirts of his robe in the cave, (1 Sam. 24:5.) Saul replies, "Behold I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly."

O see hence, that faith works by love and patience. This will overcome, when wrath and resentment only add fuel to an enemy's rage. May we not all take up Saul's confession, and say in many instances, "I have erred exceedingly?" It shall begin at my door. I will confess (the Lord of love and patience pardon me) I have erred exceedingly, in contending for the truth, with too much of the fire of nature's passion, instead of that holy zeal, which is accompanied with love. Those I have offended, I pray them to forgive, and humbly entreat their prayers for me, a poor sinner. O for a warm zeal, tempered with the fire of love. This is the likeliest means to cause them who err in spirit, to come to understanding, and they who murmur, to learn doctrine. (Isa. 29:24.) But this is not the true reason of my choice of this text. But the printer of the former edition confessed he had erred, in printing the pages wrong, which obliged me to write a meditation on two pages. The next page should have been 279, for which the reader's excuse is humbly entreated. In that 29th of Isaiah, (verse 19.) it is said, "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord." O my soul! "The joy of the Lord is thy strength," (Nehem. 8:10.) Beware then of every work which may interrupt thy holy, humble, spiritual joy, in the God of thy salvation. To joy in thy Lord always, is commanded, (Phil. 4:4.) Ever remember, it is connected with meekness; and the meek increase their joy. Seest thou those who err in spirit, and

murmur against the doctrines of grace? Take St. Paul's advice, "In meekness instructing those," etc. 2 Tim. 2:25.

Lord save me from my daily faults,
I'm deeply prone to err:
Keep me, from anger's fierce assaults,
By holy, loving fear.

Let meekness in my soul prevail,
And nature's fire subdue:
Tho' in myself I'm weak and frail,
Thro' Christ I all can do.

OCTOBER 4.

Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord. Jer. 23:29.

How comforting this reflection? "We, who were sometimes afar off, are now made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Ephes. 2:13.) How happy is the soul, when it finds nearness of access to God, and enjoys sweet converse with him? Then with Jeremiah it says, "Let me talk with thee, O Lord," (chap. 12:1.) Then the Lord condescends to hear and reply. As here, he appeals to the soul's experience; and asks, What effect has my word had on thine heart? Is it not like fire? Let us consider this, that the word of the Lord may be glorified by us to-night. (1st.) It is the property of fire to communicate *light*. So doth the word. "The entrance of thy word giveth Light," (Psalm 119:130.) When we were *darkness* itself, how did the word enter, and shine into our hearts, and give us the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ? In seasons of darkness, how often has the word brought light into our souls? Thy word is a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105.) (2d.) Fire gives *heat*. How often has the Lord warmed our cold hearts, and melted down our hard hearts with the fire of his word of love and grace? "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31:3.) Say, has not such a word as this been in the heart, as burning fire shut up in our bones? (Jer. 20:9.) Lord, multiply such burning seasons. (3d.) Fire *consumeth*, so doth the word. When it burns in the heart, it consumes our cursed lusts, hateful pride, deceitful, self-righteous hopes, vain and worldly desires, legal terrors, and tormenting dread of death. Lord, cause this heavenly fire to burn in our hearts,

and consume more and more. For, (4th.) The word, like fire, *purifies*. "Ye have purified your souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit," (1 Pet. 1:22.) While the fire of the word burns within, purity is preserved in heart, lip, and life. (5th.) Fire causeth *smoke*. No sooner doth the word kindle fire in the heart, but the smoke of incense, of prayer and praise, ascend up to the Lord. Christ compares his church to "pillars of smoke," (Song 3:6.) and his people to smoking flax, (Matt. 12:20.) For the word of the Lord is like fire in their hearts, and their affections like smoke, ascend up unto him. O thou great inditer of the word! cause the word of Christ to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, that we may continue in his word, that it may be manifest, that we are his disciples indeed. John 8:31.

The Lord appeals unto each soul,
For proof of what he saith:
Doth not his word our pow'rs control,
When it is known by faith?

Like fire it burns our hearts,
And doth our lusts consume,
And fills with love our ev'ry part,
And doth our works perfume.

OCTOBER 5.

Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD. 1 Cor. 15:58.

Christian knowledge is the source of comfort, and the spring of obedience. The knowledge of God's love to us in Christ, received into the heart by faith, animates us to be, and to do, what the Lord calls us to in our lives. St. Paul appeals to Christians, *Ye know*—what? that you are called, not to loiter, but to labour: not to stand idle, but to work: not merely to talk of the truths of Christianity, but to walk in the ways of the Lord. But what constitutes it the sweetest of all labouring, working, and walking, it is the labour of love, the work of faith, and the walk of hope. And we have Christ's presence and power in all. We know, we are fully persuaded, we are divinely assured, our labour is not in vain: for it is in the Lord. It is begun by his grace, tarried on by his power, IN sweet fellowship with him, IN love to him, IN dependence on him, IN assurance that we are accepted in him; and therefore, IN an humble hope and loving desire to glorify him. Such a soul labours lawfully. His labour is accepted: his work shall be crowned: he is blessed now by his Lord: he shall be blessed eternally with the Lord. The humble soul draws back. The self-abased heart, jealous of his dear Lord's honour, cries, "Forbear! I am an unprofitable servant: have no merit: I come short in all I do: my desert is hell. I claim nothing at my Lord's hand: I am a poor sinner, who must be infinitely and eternally indebted to the riches of free grace."

True, O soul! thou dost not work, like free-will hirelings, for wages; yet, as a free-grace labourer, thou shalt have a free-grace reward. Not of debt, due to thy merit; but of grace, by thy Lord's free promise. Not a crumb of comfort, not a drop of cold water, given in the name of Christ, to one of his, but thy Lord notices in love, takes kindly at thy hand, and will never, never forget. O matchless love of Christ! he gives grace to miserable sinners; his grace works to will and to do in their hearts; and he rewards hell-deserving sinners with gifts of grace in time, and with the riches of glory in eternity. O blessed Master! O precious labour! O joyful recompense of reward! Say now Christian, is not here all encouragement to diligence and activity? O go on labouring for thy Lord's glory. Large wages seeking IN, not *for* thy works. Confidently mayest thou say, with St. Paul, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." 2 Tim. 4:8.

I dare not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord hath done;
But would I work like any slave,
From love to God's dear Son.

No works of faith can be in vain,
Because they're wrought in love;
Since now our enmity is slain,
We work for Christ above.

OCTOBER 6.

My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.
Psal. 119:81.

David's words furnish us with these observations: (1st.) That it is a sure evidence, that that sinner is savingly convinced of sin by the Spirit of God, when the salvation of Jesus is the desire of his heart. (2d.) That the soul, though destitute of the joy of faith, in the assurance of interest in Christ's salvation, yet may have the grace of *hope* in lively exercise. (3d.) That in fainting frames of soul, the word of the Lord is the sure support of hope. Study these points: settle them in your hearts. The Lord give comfort from them! When a person faints, the blood returns to the heart: it ceaseth to flow through the veins. Hence, the spirits sink; nature fails; life and strength depart; the eyes see not; the hands cannot hold; the feet cannot walk. Have you not experienced it thus with your souls? Have you not found things at a very low ebb with you, just ready to give up all hope, and let all confidence go, just at the last gasp? See the actions of a gracious soul. Learn experience by David's conduct. He thinks of his best Friend, his dear Saviour. He looks up to him. He tells him what he faints for: *thy salvation*. For fresh knowledge of interest in it: for the joys and comforts of it. What! when his sin stared him in the face? when his conscience was burdened with guilt? when his spirits failed him, his soul fainted within him, and without assurance in his heart of interest in Christ's salvation? is this a time to go to Christ? Yes—the very time: the proper time: the time of *need*, in which we are exhorted to come boldly. (Heb. 4:16.) O, my fainting fellow-sinners!

What a precious Saviour is Jesus! What a glorious salvation hath he finished for us! What a special mercy, that the loving Spirit excites desires in our souls, after the enjoyment of it! Well, though David's soul faints, yet, says he, I hope in thy word. What, without faith! No: he had living faith in his heart, though he fainted for the joy and comfort of faith. He believed the word of grace and salvation, and he hoped for the fulfilment of the promises of his Lord, to the reviving of his soul. He honours his Lord's word, trusts in his faithfulness, and casts the anchor of hope upon his truth. "Go and do likewise; for we are saved by hope." (Rom. 8:24.) "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither Jesus is for us entered." Heb. 6:19, 20.

My spirits sink, my heart doth faint
For thy salvation, Lord:
Thy peace bestow, thy presence grant;
My hope is in thy word.

On that I daily will rely,
'Till thou my soul revive:
Thy word of truth can never die,
Therefore by faith I live.

OCTOBER 7.

Ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of GOD. Col. 2:12.

Who are risen with Christ? All the members of his mystical body. He is their head and representative. They are all mystically risen with him. But they have no knowledge or comfort of this, till another resurrection is experienced by them. This is what the apostle here alludes to. This is by faith. As soon as any poor sinner knows, understands, and believes, that Christ died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, that soul is actually risen with Christ. Here, behold, (1st.) the preciousness of faith. (2d.) Whose operation it is. (3d.) The glorious effects it hath upon the heart and life. It brings Christ into the soul. Faith causes the soul to ascend up to a risen Saviour. Thus, this living, powerful, influencing grace, which is the work of the Holy Ghost, is distinguished from a dead faith, a lifeless assent, a barren notion, which floats in the heads of carnal professors. Examine yourselves. Prove and try your faith this night. Is your faith from Christ above? Then it leads your hearts and affections, from things below, to Christ above. Be not deceived. Take not up with a notion of faith in your head, instead of the grace of faith in your heart. The former will leave you just where it found you: in your sins, with the love of the world reigning in your hearts: the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, your idols and your pursuits; and yourself only, a poor, cold-hearted, formal professor. O how many of this sort abound! They differ from the rest of the world, only in notion and speculation; in tongue and doctrine.

Lord Jesus, forbid that this should be our state! If we have the faith of the operation of God the Holy Ghost, our souls will be fired with the love of Christ; our hearts will burn with ardent love to him, his truths, his people, and his cause. We shall delight to live above with him, and long to reign eternally in his presence. We shall consider this body as our prison, overcome the world as our enemy, and treat all things with contempt in comparison of fellowship with our God and Saviour. If we are not all times thus happy, at least we shall hunger and thirst after it. Risen souls are earnestly concerned to have gospel doctrines brought into heart-experience and life-influence. O, Sun of Righteousness! let us feel thy warm enlivening beams upon our hearts, that we may not grow cold, formal, and languid before thee. Thine is the power.

Then raise our low affections, Lord,
To live above with thee:
Let formal frames be e'er abhorr'd;
Let us thy glory see.

Thus shall we know we're rais'd indeed,
From earth, and hell, and sin;
To live with thee, our glorious Head,
Whose love doth reign within.

OCTOBER 8.

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Psalm 34:2.

There was a poor, vainglorious boaster, who had arrived to the summit of his happiness, and attained the zenith of his glory. The sun of prosperity shone with great splendour upon him. He bid adieu to all care. Down he sat to solace himself. "Soul!" said he, "thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry." But, awful moment! solemn speech! God said unto him, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee." (Luke 12:20.) O how many such fools are there, who think the soul can be made happy, in outward ease, eating and drinking, and carnal enjoyments. Alas! one moment dashes the honey of their comforts, into the gall of disappointment. Not so, that soul who boasts in the Lord. This was not a transient fit of David's, caused by a warm frame of the passions. For, says he, "I will bless the Lord at *all times*: his praise shall be *continually* in my mouth." This is living, indeed, like a son of God, and an heir of glory. St. Paul, like David, sets us the same example. Christ and free grace, says Luther, was ever in his mouth. He never thought he could mention the precious name of Christ too often. He repeats it almost in every verse of the 1 Cor. 1. If Christ is the boast and glory of our souls, his name will ever be uppermost in our hearts, and upon our tongues. It was the martyr Lambert's motto, "None but Christ, none but Christ." It is said of one, that he seldom, or ever, mentioned the name Jesus, without a tear. A martyr was judged to be dead, being burned as black as a coal in the fire, moved his scorched lips,

and was heard to say, "Sweet Jesus!" and fell asleep. These were all poor, needy sinners, like ourselves. They saw their want of Christ: they believed what he had done for them, and was to them: they gloried IN him, and made him the boast of their souls. The humble are glad to hear of this. It delights their souls, to hear the name of their Saviour boasted in, his sacrifice gloried of, his righteousness exalted, and his salvation the triumph of sinners. Their hearts catch the sound; and, with a glow of the fire of love, they join the heavenly cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and glory, and blessing," etc. (Rev. 5:12.) O, how different is this from self-exalting and self-boasting! But God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. James 4:6.

What tho' I am but filth and sin,
A wretch both vile and poor,
Yet I will boast of Christ my King,
My righteousness and store.

Jesu, who gave thyself to me,
Keep down my haughty pride:
Let all my glorying be of thee,
For I have nought beside.

OCTOBER 9.

But GOD, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with CHRIST (by grace ye are saved.) Eph. 2:4, 5.

My dear brethren in Christ, and thou, O my soul, one chief reason why, at any time, we have so little comfort, and are so low in joy, is, we do not enough believe and live upon the love of God. Let us never think of, or look for any mercy from God, without considering that it flows from *love*. Is God rich in mercy to any? It is because he loves them. Great love, everlasting, unchangeable love, is the source and spring of rich mercy. It was rich mercy, for God to give us his beloved Son to be our Saviour in time. This was because of his great love to us before time. He loved us from eternity in his Son. He loves us invariably the same through time, and under all states and circumstances. Yea, when we were forlorn, hopeless, helpless, loathsome, and desperate, even *dead in sins*, he loved us with *great love*; too great to be conceived or expressed. He manifested it, by bestowing *rich mercy* upon us; mercy, so rich, so free, so liberal, that it came to us unsought, unasked, undeserved. His great love to us, was the parent of his rich mercy to us. Mercy without love may be exercised by an enemy: but the mercy of God flows from the loving heart of a father. He saw our souls dead in sin; dead under his law; dead to himself. Did he leave us? No. He loved us with great love; therefore, in rich mercy, he quickened us. Quickened us! is that all? A quickened soul, some think, is in a very inferior degree of grace. It is neither justified nor sanctified. But such are great strangers to the rich mercy and

great love of God; and they do not consider that souls are quickened *together with Christ*. There is the sweetness of quickening mercy enjoyed. Quickening souls see their sinfulness, know their poverty, feel their misery and wretchedness, and groan under a body of sin and death: but here is their glory, joy, and comfort—they are one with Christ. His life is theirs, his death is theirs, his righteousness is theirs, his holiness is theirs, his fulness is theirs. Though sin is not dead in us, yet being one with Christ, we are dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God. *By grace are ye saved*. Neither you nor your works have the least hand in salvation. Therefore, rejoice. It is not precarious and uncertain, whether you shall be saved. For quickened souls may be as sure of it, as if they were now before the throne. O may love, mercy, and grace be the constant theme of our souls!

We'll sing rich mercy and great love,
To us so freely giv'n
By God our Father from above,
Whereby we're heirs of heav'n.

Then let us live like saints on earth,
Tho' we are sinners poor,
That we may prove our heav'nly birth,
And Christ our Lord adore.

OCTOBER 10.

Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. Psa. 38:4.

Though there may be pleasures in sin for a season, yet at the last, "it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." O come hither and see, how the venom of sin has overspread poor David's whole frame. Read this Psalm. Mark the anguish of his conscience, and the distress of his soul; and say, is not sin exceedingly sinful? What pain, out of hell, can be compared to the anguish of a guilty conscience? But better, infinitely better, to smart for sin here, than to cry out under the smart of sin and hell. Conviction of sin by the Spirit, is in order to cleansing of sin by the blood of Christ. Better to roar from disquietude of the soul on earth, than to sleep secure in sin, till we drop into and roar for sin in the bottomless pit. One or other will be the portion of all flesh. Two similes are before us, expressive of David's distress. (1st.) "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head." He was like a man in the greatest danger of drowning; overwhelmed with distress, like one whose head was under water. His iniquities caused his soul to sink within him. (2d.) They were as a heavy burden. He had greater weight upon him, than he could stand under. He cries out, as though ready to be crushed by its ponderous load, "They are too heavy for me." (3d.) Look at his cry, and hear upon whom he calls. "Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation." (ver. 22.) Though sinking under, and pressed down with his iniquities on his conscience, yet he had salvation in view, and the Lord of his salvation as his hope. O Lord, MY Jesus! Now, can you be in a worse plight than David

was? Can you be under more distressing circumstances? He was sinking in deep waters, with a ponderous load upon him. In such a state, you may discover whether your convictions are evangelical, and you possess the faith of God's elect or not. Legal convictions only fill the soul with terror, drive it from God, and leave it in despair without hope. Convictions from the Spirit, the Comforter, lead the soul to Christ: and the faith, hope, and cry of the soul will be, after the help and salvation of Jesus *only*. For he is "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." Behold him, O my soul, under every sense of guilt. Believe him, under every dejection of soul; for he hath assured us, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Matt. 12:31.

When sin does weigh my spirits down,
And dread besets my soul;
Lord, then thy sacrifice I'll own,
Thy blood can make me whole.

I bless the Spirit's holy grace,
Who doth convince of sin,
And leads me to my Saviour's face,
For pard'ning love within.

OCTOBER 11.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of GOD. John 1:12.

Man lost paradise by receiving a gift from Satan: there is no way to regain it, but by receiving Christ, the gift of God. Am I one of the many, who have received Christ? This question is of eternal moment. If I have not, no matter what I profess, by what name I am called, what I think of myself, or others think concerning me; for I am certainly in a state of wrath, exposed to eternal damnation. What answer does conscience return to this important question? God may this night require my soul. I may be in eternity before the morning light. Have I received Christ or not? What is it to receive Christ? Many precious souls are sadly perplexed and greatly distressed here. But why should they? St. John plainly tells us, to receive Christ, is to believe on his name, that he is the anointed Saviour of lost sinners. Do you receive this truth into your heart? Does your mind go out after Christ? Do you hunger and thirst to know him, as your Saviour, to save you? Then so sure as you exist, you do believe in Christ's name. Bless the Holy Spirit, who has opened your eyes to see his glory, and your heart to receive this precious Jesus. Hear and rejoice. He gives you, and all such, "power to become the sons of God." Not merely puts it in the power of your free-will to choose, whether you will become a son of God or not; but he actually bestows this high honour upon us. He gives us the right (or *privilege*, as in the margin of our Bibles) of enjoying the comfort and blessing of being the adopted sons of God. O the riches of new covenant-grace and love! What a miracle of

mercy is this! Of the children of wrath and heirs of hell, Christ makes us sons of God and heirs of heaven! Why then do you ever live uncomfortably, or walk unholy? It is, because you do not assert your right, maintain your privilege, and live up to your power, in your mind and conscience. Hence, love to, and delight in, your Father God, and Saviour Jesus, are wanting. O! remember, ever remember, as you received Christ by faith, all your power, peace, and comfort, flow from him through faith. Study, strive, and pray to the Spirit, to keep faith lively in act and exercise, that you may live and walk on earth, so as to glorify your Father, who is in heaven. For if you are a son of God, by faith in Christ, you have the heart of a son: the fear, the love, the hope, and the delight of a son of God. And you will rejoice to think, that you will soon be at home with your heavenly Father.

Am I a son of God, thro' faith
Receiving Jesus Christ?
Rejoice, my soul, and glory give
To him in whom thou'rt blest.

May it my daily study be,
To live and walk by faith,
And glorify my Father God,
Obeying what he saith.

OCTOBER 12.

Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. 1 Peter 1:5.

The wicked, who are totally ignorant of the doctrine of grace, assert this truth by their common saying, "They only are well kept, whom God keeps." Many, who profess to preach the gospel, do not hold forth such sound divinity as this. Consider, these three points: Who are thus kept? How are they kept? Unto what are they kept? (1st.) Who are kept? St. Paul tells us, (1st.) they are the elect according to the foreknowledge of God. (2d.) "Sanctified by the Spirit unto obedience." They obey the Father's voice: they hear and believe on his beloved Son. Hence, (3d.) Sprinkled by the blood of Christ from the guilt of sin in their consciences. (4th.) "Begotten to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance reserved in heaven for them." The work of the glorious Trinity has passed upon them. (5th.) Christ calls them, "My sheep." (John 10:14.) This implies that we are very weak, timorous, helpless creatures. If left to our own keeping, to stand by our own power, and to persevere by our own faithfulness, alas! we should be quite out of heart; for we must perish everlastingly. But God does not beget children, whom Satan shall destroy. Christ doth not redeem souls, whom hell shall receive. The Spirit sanctifies none, who shall have their portion with the damned. Therefore, they are all kept. (2d.) How? By the power of God, as an impregnable garrison. They are garrisoned in Christ, in God. The power of almighty God surrounds them. This is the God-honouring, soul triumphing language of their faith, "Jehovah is my rock, my fortress, my

deliverer, my God, (my Elohim in covenant) my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." (Psa. 18:2.) You see they are kept through faith. That keeps them low, humble, and dependent: that leads them quite out of self and nature, into God's power, grace, and strength. They are sensible of their own weakness to stand, inability to persevere, and proneness to fall away. Therefore, they trust most on the power of God through faith. Their faith can never fail. Christ prays for them. As he keeps their persons, so he suffers not their faith to fail: they look unto Jesus. Is this your blessed character? Rejoice: for, (3d.) you are kept—unto what? salvation. That shall be the end of your faith? Those whom Christ has redeemed by his blood, justified by his grace, he will save unto eternal glory. These are as safe in his hands now, as though round his throne in glory.

Lord, keep me safe, and keep me near
Thy blessed self in love;
And make me ever more to fear
The ways of sin to prove.

OCTOBER 13.

What then? Rom. 6:15.

These short and frequent interrogations of Scripture are greatly to be prized. There is a vast deal contained in these questions: "What shall we say then? What then?" They are like the word *Shibboleth*, with which they tried the people of old; but they could not frame their mouths to pronounce it. They corrupted the word, and said, *Sibboleth*. So many at this day corrupt the word of the glorious doctrine of grace, by leaving out the H, *holiness*, which all the doctrines of the holy gospel are divinely calculated to promote. "What then?" comes most suitable after the precious doctrine of the justified saints of God, being kept by his power unto eternal salvation. "What then?" O! whenever you think of God's everlasting love, and Christ's finished salvation, and of glory being sure and certain to you, ask your heart, What then? Shall I continue in sin, because such unmerited love, grace, and mercy abounds to me? No. You will reject the thought with the utmost abhorrence, crying, in the fervour of faith and love, God forbid! For, (1st.) The soul will be kept alive to God. You will have sincere love to him, his truths, his promises, and his commands. You will have a filial fear of offending him, a godly jealousy for his honour and glory, and delight in his worship and service. All this naturally results from a lively faith in his Son Jesus Christ. Where this is not, all is not right within. There will be suspicions of your faith and hope. (2d.) You will be dead to sin. You cannot live and walk under the power of it. You will be groaning under it; striving against it; aspiring after victory over it; longing for perfect freedom from

it; looking to Jesus, and expecting it. (3d.) You will be dead to the world. You can no longer live after its vain customs and sinful manners, pleased with its sensual pleasures and carnal delights. You will put away all such childish fears, now you are a man in Christ. (4th.) You will live in love with the people of God, and have sweet fellowship with the brethren of Christ. These you will choose and delight in, as your companions and familiar friends. You will be perfectly agreed with the men of this world. They like not your company: you will avoid theirs. For, (5th.) your grand study and chief aim is, to keep up and walk in sweet fellowship with God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, whatever tends to prevent the comfortable enjoyment of this, you will carefully avoid: what tends to promote this, you will diligently pursue.

If God doth sinners ever love,
And Christ has dy'd to save, what then?
Our hearts and hopes should be above,
And we should never sin again.

Vouchsafe to keep me daily, Lord,
In all the paths of holiness;
Conform my life unto thy Word,
That peace and joy I may possess.

OCTOBER 14.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Phil. 3:15.

Speaking of righteousness unto justification of eternal life, St. Paul says, "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded," (Rom. 11:7.) What were they blinded by? Their own righteousness. This, like a cloud, intercepted the glory of the sun of righteousness from their minds. Their own righteousness prevented them from feeling the want of the righteousness of Christ, to justify them before God. So of perfection. Many are so blinded with their own fancied perfection, that they see not the glorious perfection of Christ, and the way in which sinners in themselves, are absolutely perfect *in him*. St. Paul just before said, he was not perfect. Now he says, he is perfect. What can he mean? Ironically, say some; by way of severe sarcasm upon those who fancied themselves perfect. Say others, comparatively perfect, with respect to those who were ignorant of Christ: perfect in part, but not in the whole. But, I humbly presume, it is most agreeable to the analogy of faith, to suppose, he here means, what he elsewhere speaks of, "perfect as pertaining to the conscience, by the work of Christ," (Heb. 9:9.) How are some weak minds puzzled, and others deluded, about perfection! Mind. Here is a perfection, which every believer is possessed of: pertaining to the conscience. This is received and enjoyed there by faith, in the atonement and righteousness of the Son of God. "By whom we have now received the atonement," (Rom. 5:11.) It is received by faith, and applied to our consciences, so that we have no more conscience of sins, but

what we have the perfect atonement of Christ's blood to plead, and to cleanse us from. So of the condemnation of the law. We have the perfect righteousness of Christ to answer it: hence there is now no condemnation to us. Thus, being delivered from wrath, guilt, and condemnation, by the perfect work of our Immanuel, our consciences are at perfect peace with God; perfectly reconciled to him. We are made perfectly acceptable in the Beloved. Thus we are perfect: for our title to glory is perfect and complete. The Spirit who thus perfected us by faith, bears witness of it in the word, and to our consciences. O glorious state! O blessed perfection! Thus our Lord's prayer is answered upon us, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made *perfect* in one." (John 17:23.) Hence St. Paul exhorts, "Be thus minded." We must reserve this for the next meditation. Ever remember, "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb. 7:19.

Perfect in Christ, we stand complete
Before God's holy throne,
Justice acquits, grace maketh us meet:
Glory to God alone.

OCTOBER 15.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.
Phil. 3:15.

St. Paul says, his preaching Christ, warning and teaching every man of his ruined state, in all wisdom, was to this great and glorious end—To present every man perfect *in* Christ Jesus. (Col. 1:28.) How often have our minds been distressed and dejected, (I speak for one) from seeing our imperfection in all we are, and in all we do? Instead of this, we are called, again and again, to rejoice in the Lord *always*," (Phil. 4:4.) This we shall do, if our consciences be made perfect, by the blessed work of Christ, received by faith, as was observed in the last meditation. O rest not short, of perfect satisfaction in this matter. The work of Christ has perfectly satisfied God's justice and truth, and rendered honourable his holy law: why should it not then perfectly satisfy your conscience, and make it perfect? Now, we are exhorted to be like minded. In what respect? You will see in the foregoing verses. (1st.) Rejoice in the Lord. This is the happy privilege of every believer; yet, how sadly neglected! It is a command by which the Lord is as much honoured, as by obeying any one of the ten commandments. Consider this: be concerned to practise it. (2d.) Beware of those who have confidence in the flesh. St. Paul calls them dogs, and evil workers; as though they were ever barking and caviling against the perfection which is in Christ Jesus, and opposing somewhat of their own to it. (3d.) Worship God in the spirit; in the life and spirit of the gospel of grace and peace. (4th.) Count all things loss for Christ, by which you gain all things. Renounce your own righteousness,

for the righteousness of Christ received by faith. Desire to be found in Christ living, dying, and at the judgment. (5th.) Win Christ, and wear him by faith, from day to day, that you may be made conformable to his death, in dying to sin, self, and the world. (6th.) Follow after Christ: knowing that all your perfection is in him, that you may apprehend him, catch faster hold of him, cleave more stedfastly to him, abide more comfortably in him; that you may enjoy more sweet fellowship with him, for which Christ apprehended you, when you was posting to hell. O never forget his love in this! Take faster hold of him. (7th.) "Press towards the mark, for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Your calling is clear. The prize is before you—a crown of righteousness. The Lord, the righteous Judge, holds it out for you, and will surely give it you. Looking to him by faith—"Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before"—Christ and glory.

Tho' perfect now, we still press on,
Perfection's prize to gain:
We live by faith on God's dear Son,
Till all our foes are slain.

OCTOBER 16.

We also joy in God, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom we have now received the atonement. Rom. 5:11.

Having obtained the King's free pardon, for a poor man cast for transportation, I carried it to the goal to him. Seeing the poor fettered creature fall down upon his knees to return thanks, caused a flood of tears of heart-felt joy to burst from mine eyes. I thought, this is just what thou, O my precious Saviour, hast done for me. Thou hast obtained a free and full pardon for all my sins, set my soul at liberty, and filled it with peace and joy, by the one atonement of thy precious blood. The poor convict had not read his pardon. He had not seen the King's name to it. I only made the report to him, that I had obtained it. He believed me. Hence he was happy, joyful, and thankful. Thus he received his pardon. Now here is a simple and plain idea of faith: Of what? Receiving the atonement of Christ, and of joy in God. You are a poor sinner. The Spirit of God comes and convinces you of sin. You are arraigned, tried, brought in guilty, cast and condemned in the court of conscience. You are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief. Here you wait in sorrow and distress for the sentence of the law to be executed upon you. You find you can do nothing that can obtain pardon and liberty for your soul. But the gospel brings the glad tidings of the atonement of Christ to your ears, and that by it, a full and free remission is obtained for sinners. Now, what reception does it meet with in your heart? Say you, I believe it from the very ground of my heart, but I fear it is not for me. It is free for all, who will receive it by faith. You believe it, therefore you have received

it. You ought to joy in God for it. Examine into the grounds of your fears and doubts. Is the atonement of Christ sufficient to satisfy divine justice, and obtain pardon and peace? This you cannot doubt. Is it not free for all sorts of sinners? Of this you can have no fear. "For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of ALL acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinner*s," (1 Tim. 1:15.) who are nothing but cursed sinners, and have nothing but cursed sin in them. Do you doubt that you are too great a sinner? This cannot be. St. Paul says of sinners, I am *chief*. Yet he received the atonement, and was saved by it. Learn hence, (1st.) That all joy in God springs from the *one* atonement of Christ for sin, and that *only*, exclusive of every thing else. (2d.) Every one who believes in Christ has *now* received this atonement. And therefore, (3d.) Ought constantly to joy in God the Father's everlasting love.

No joy in God, to him no love,
We ever can possess;
'Till faith is given from above,
In Christ our righteousness.

OCTOBER 17.

Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Gal. 5:1.

Here is somewhat enjoyed, danger of being deprived of it, and the necessity of standing fast in it. Let us consider these three points, looking unto Jesus. (1st.) What is enjoyed? *Liberty*. One of the most precious blessings in life. But this of all liberties, is the most precious. For, Christ hath made us free in our consciences. (1st.) From the guilt and power of sin. (2d.) From all condemnation of the law. And (3d.) To have access to God as righteous persons. He hath washed away the guilt of our sins by his blood: and subdued the power of them by his Spirit. "He hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13.) So that "there is therefore no condemnation to us, being in Christ Jesus," (Rom. 8:1.) He presents us before his Father in his perfect righteousness. We are accepted in the Beloved, by God as perfectly righteous, "to the praise of the glory of his grace," (Ephes. 1:6.) Thus Christ hath freed us from the law, sin, death, and hell. He has brought us into his blessed liberty by his Spirit. We enjoy this precious freedom in our consciences by faith. O brethren, let us glory in our inestimable privilege. Let us ever rejoice in Christ Jesus, and give him the glory of our hearts, lips, and lives for it. But, (2d.) See your danger of being entangled again with the yoke of bondage. We [who] now enjoy the precious liberty of Christ, were once entangled with the law. A most dreadful yoke it was. We felt wrath working in our consciences, and

dread and terror hung over our guilty heads from day to day. O how did we then pine and cry, for Christ to set our souls at liberty. We were tried and bound with the chain of our sins—fettered by the law—shut up in unbelief. My soul deeply felt this distress. O beware of bondage again. There is danger on the right hand and on the left. The pleasure of sin, and the pride of our hearts, seeking either in whole, or in part, justification by the law of works, are both equally contrary to our freedom in Christ. O let us therefore, (3d.) Stand fast in the liberty of Christ, (1st.) Against all temptation to sin. Oppose your happiness in Christ to all the pleasures in the world, which are but for a season. (2d.) Stand fast in your freedom in Christ, against all the corrupt notions of self-righteous men who are under the law, seeking to be justified in whole, or in part, by their own works. (3d.) Against all the accusations of Satan. We overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. (4th.) Against all the legal workings of our flesh. For we are the Lord's freemen. We are no more under bondage.

Stand fast, my soul, in Christ thy Lord,
To legal preachers give not way;
Embolden'd by God's precious word,
Maintain thy freedom ev'ry day.

OCTOBER 18.

And he requested for himself that he might die. 1 Kings 19:4.

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are," (James 5:17.) This request proves it. It arose from fear and discontent. Both were occasioned by the threats of a weak, but wicked woman. Jezebel threatened his life. O how soon, and by what weak means, are the fine frames of God's children spoiled and discomposed! What Elijah! that great prophet of the Lord, who had wrought so many notable miracles in the name of the Lord, who had been so miraculously fed by the ravens, according to the command of the Lord—he who had courage to say, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself to incensed Ahab to-day." What he! who had zeal to face four hundred and fifty of Baal's priests, and to command them all to be slain, what does he request to die, because of the threatenings of a woman! What shall we say to this? Verily, human nature is the same in all, whether patriarchs, prophets, or apostles. All men are not the same at all times. The flesh is part of themselves. It lusts against the Spirit. This is manifest in all, none excepted. What is man when left of God? What are the best of men, when left to themselves? And yet the same apostle St. James says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken, in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience," (James 5:10.) But where shall we find a perfect character? St. Paul might well say, "We have this treasure (all the gifts and graces of God's Spirit) in earthen vessels." Why? "That the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us," (2

Cor. 4:7.) But if earthen vessels were not sometimes left to themselves, they would forget this. Elijah, like Paul, was in danger of being exalted above measure, for his eminent gifts, graces, and miraculous works. He is left to be buffeted, that he might know his own sinfulness and impotence. Learn a lesson hence to-night. Prophets, apostles, ministers of Christ, are men of like passions, frail sinners, like yourselves. St. Paul forbears glorying; "Lest, says he, any man should think of me above what he seemeth to be," (2 Cor. 12:6.) If we do not so judge of ministers, we shall be in great danger of harm thereby. (1st.) We shall over-rate them, look to them, instead of through them to God. We shall rest on their teaching, instead of God's. Then, (2d.) If we do but see those infirmities in them, which are common to men, O then, who could have thought it! We shall under-rate them, and be prejudiced against them, so as not to be profited by them. Cease ye from man.

OCTOBER 19.

Behold, he prayeth! Acts 9:11.

In many trades, it is customary to shew samples or patterns. By these men judge of the goodness or quality of the whole. St. Paul sets himself forth as a sample, or pattern, of the free, distinguishing, sovereign, unmerited grace of God, that we should judge of its nature by its efficacy upon him. "I obtained mercy, for this cause, that in me first (a first rate sinner) Jesus Christ may shew forth his all long suffering, for a *pattern* to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting," (1 Tim. 1:16.) Thou hast seen this pattern of free grace. What dost thou think of it? The whole is alike with the pattern. It cometh alike upon elect sinners. It finds no more prerequisites, fitness, qualifications, or conditions in any, than it did in St. Paul. Whenever it takes place upon any, it produceth the same effects as it did in him. Grace and mercy from Jesus, makes Saul pray to Jesus. There is the emphasis. This is the main point. "Behold, he prayeth!" To whom? Doubtless he had prayed much and often, while he remained an unconverted Pharisee. But it was to an *unknown* God. He knew there was a God. He knew it was his duty to pray to him. But he knew him not. But now, Jesus speaks to him. God manifests himself to him in Christ. Therefore, behold, take special notice of this. "Behold he prayeth," to Jesus: to God in Christ. He no longer durst come before God in his own name, nor expect access to, and acceptance with him, on account of his own sincerity, works of righteousness, etc.; but in the name, blood, and righteousness of the Son of God ONLY, so he prayed, so he evidenced his conversion to

Jesus. Hence, the true Spirit of prayer manifested itself in him. His prayers were agreeable to, and sprung from his knowledge of himself as a guilty sinner, and faith in the Son of God as the only Saviour. This is the prayer which God delights in, takes special notice of, and refers to as an evidence of true conversion. Hence know, prayerless souls are Christless. Prayer, without the knowledge of Christ, faith in him, hope of eternal life by him, and acceptance through him, is only service, and formal duty. But, the spirit of prayer arises in the heart, from a discovery of God in Christ—the knowledge of him, by believing his word of grace and truth, and expecting his mercy and salvation, according to his great and precious promises given in Christ. Dost thou pray thus? Then it may truly be said of thee, behold thou art converted. Thy prayers evidence it. The God who heareth prayer, hath manifested himself to thee, as he doth not unto the world.

We cannot pray when we are dead,
Because we feel no want:
But when we seek God's gracious aid,
In mercy he doth grant.

OCTOBER 20.

But one thing is needful. Luke 10:42.

Happy, most happy for that soul, who can simply bring all things into a unit, to centre in one point. More than one object perplexes the mind. If, to double business bent, we stand and pause where we shall first begin, and perhaps both neglect. What is the *one thing needful*? It is plain our Saviour means, the soul keeping close company with himself. This Mary did. She sat at his feet and heard his word. Every thing else is but cumbering work, compared with this. For this one thing comprises all the holiness, happiness, and heavenly-mindedness of the soul. O if we have the presence of Jesus, guilty tears vanish—dejecting doubts are scattered—legal terrors are silenced—anxious cares subside—strong temptations lose their force—Satan is resisted—afflictions sweetened—turbulent passions calmed—raging corruptions subdued—pride is brought down—humility is excited—peace with God is enjoyed—holiness is promoted—the fear of death conquered—the terrors of hell chased away—the prospect of glory, in the full fruition of Jesus, is aspired after, and longed for—earth loses its charms—heaven is in the heart—to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, becomes the one desire of the soul. Say, O Christian, what *one thing* else can produce so many, such blessed effects, as close communion with our Saviour? Is not this then the *one thing*, above all others, needful? Needful at all times and in all seasons: needful in the hour of prosperity, and in the day of adversity. O, if this *one thing* is maintained in the soul, believer, you may live as you list, and do what you please. For

sweet communion with Christ, ever subjects the will—attracts the affections—and begets holy conformity to him. You will not list, you cannot love, you dare not follow any thing which is contrary to your Lord, while you live near to him, and dwell in holy fellowship with him. Thus religion is brought to a single point. Holiness and happiness resolved into *one* thing. There is but *one* Lord, to make you holy and happy. But *one* faith, by which you know it, and cleave to him for this. But there are a thousand things to prevent this. O may this one thing needful rise superior to all! Think, O my soul, of Mary's choice. Remember thy Saviour's approbation of it. Do thou also choose this good part, which shall never be taken away.

Beset with snares on ev'ry hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand,
Saviour divine diffuse thy light,
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

Engage this roving treach'rous heart
To fix on Mary's better part—
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away,

OCTOBER 21.

Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. 1 Sam. 20:4.

Such is the language of generous love, and sincere friendship. There never was a greater instance of it, subsisting between men, than between Jonathan and David. Poor David was in great distress. Saul sought his life. He flies to his friend Jonathan, opens his whole heart to him, and solemnly assures him, "As thy soul liveth, there is but one step between me and death." On which, Jonathan thus declares his love and faithfulness. "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." How must David's heart be affected by this noble, this loving promise! O Christian, here is somewhat very similar to thine own case. Consider, (1st.) There is but a step between thee and death. Thou knowest not how soon thy last step may be taken. What friend hast thou to go to? Verily, the King's Son, the Son of God. As Jonathan signifies, *given of the Lord*: so Jesus is the gift of the Lord, to be a friend and a Saviour to all his Davids; to all his beloved people. (2d.) Great as the love, sincere as the friendship of Jonathan was; yet the love and friendship of Jesus infinitely exceeds it. Jonathan never laid down his life for his friend David. Jesus did for all his beloved: and he gives them this full and precious promise, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, that will I do," (John 14:13.) (3d.) The power, as well as the love of our heavenly friend Jesus, infinitely exceeds Jonathan's. His love might wish to do that for David, which his power was not able to effect. But not so with Christ. His power is as great as his love, and neither knows measure nor end. (4th.) Was David happy in having

such a friend, in whose bosom he could pour his sorrows, and upon whose love he could trust his concerns? Infinitely more happy art thou, O Christian, thou beloved of the Lord. Does thy soul desire heaven below and heaven above in the enjoyment of Christ? "He is able to do exceedingly abundant above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," (Ephes. 3:20.) Blessed be the day, I ever knew this beloved Friend. All power in heaven and earth is committed to our friend Jesus. Seeing this is so, why art not thou certainly happy, in such a friend as Christ is? Why, (1st.) You entertain base suspicions of his love, by unbelief. Therefore, (2d.) You do not prove his love and his power, by coming freely to him, and telling him thy sorrows, as David did to Jonathan. Ye have not, because ye ask not, James 4:2.

How sweet upon our Saviour's love
Daily to meditate!
It brings down comfort from above,
And doth to heav'n translate.

OCTOBER 22.

For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Rom. 4:14.

Who are of the law? The openly professed Jew only? Nay, verily; but every man, who has the faith and hope of a Jew, he is of the law. What is their faith and hope? Every man's hope is of the same nature as his faith. A Jew believes, that he is to seek for righteousness and life by the works of the law—that on account of his obedience to it, he hopes he shall be an heir of life and glory. Well, but the Jews totally reject Christ, says one, but I do not. I believe Christ died for the sins of the whole world; that I am justified, and pardoned through his blood now; and that at the last day, I shall be justified, and entitled to God's kingdom, for the sake of my good works: that there is first a justification by faith, and a second justification by works. Take knowledge of thyself. Thou art of the law, and under the law, and expectest to be an heir of eternal life by the law. Whatever thou professest of faith in Christ, it is not the faith of the gospel. It does not own Christ the Saviour. This is a perilous, creature-exalting notion. It degrades grace. It debases Christ. It dwells only in proud hearts, legal minds, and self-righteous spirits. It awfully prevails in our day. The heirs of grace should oppose it. For, if those of the law be heirs, on any account of works, what then? Faith is made void. Faith fixes upon the sole work of the Son of God. By faith we become joint-heirs with Christ, enter in and possess the hope of eternal life. We are in actual possession of it. Hence we are filled with joy and peace in believing. That soul, who is striving by any works or doings of

his own, to make himself an heir of, and get a title to God's kingdom, he sets aside Christ: he makes faith void. He is far under the law, and *the promise is made of none effect*. Such have no regard to, nor reliance upon it. It has no effect upon their faith and hope. It is not their object. But this is the language of the heirs of faith, this the confidence of their hope, this the joy of their souls; and their faith and hope, and joy, are founded upon the immutable promise of a faithful, unchangeable Jehovah. "*In hope* of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began. Tit. 1:2.

Am I an heir of life thro' faith?
To Jesus then I'll ever cleave,
And claim the precious words by faith,
To wretched sinners who believe.

The gospel grace of God's dear Son,
Brings to my soul a better plea,
Than works of law which I have done—
Hence to the sinner's Friend I flee.

OCTOBER 23.

Is any thing too hard for the LORD? Gen. 18:14.

A clergyman went to read prayers on a working-day. There was but one person in the church, beside himself and the clerk. On which he said to the clerk, As there is nobody else here, what signifies my reading prayers? Sir, said the clerk, Is not God present? O said the priest, *I forgot God*. Do not we too often the same? Is it not hence, that our minds are exercised with doubts, fears, and distress? This question the Lord put to Sarah, when an unbecoming laugh of incredulity appeared, and this unbelieving speech dropt from her lips, "Shall I, of a surety, bear a child, who am old?" O the long-suffering kindness, the condescending goodness of our Lord! He is Jesus the Saviour, for instead of striking her dead at his feet, for her contempt of his word, he mildly reasons with her. As though he had said, Sarah, look not at yourself. Consult not flesh and blood. Judge not according to nature, reason, and the state of things. Consider the promise, look at the Promiser, the Lord God omnipotent. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" O think of the love of an incarnate God! This question, doubtless, broke the strong fetters of Sarah's unbelief, for it is thus recorded of her, "Through faith, Sarah received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful, who had promised," (Heb. 11:11.) Here is a matter brought to pass, beyond the power, and contrary to the laws of nature. But who shall set bounds to the God of nature? O soul, whenever thy mind is puzzled with any mysterious truth of God's word, solve the difficulty with thy Lord's own

interrogation, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" It is quite sufficient to silence all thy carnal reasoning, quell the risings of unbelief, and cause thee to leave all thy hard matters and difficult concerns in thy Lord's hand. Never forget his everlasting love. Never doubt his almighty power. Say, thou hast a hard heart, a sea of corruptions, a storm of afflictions and temptations, potent enemies, strong unbelief; yea, say, thou hast death and hell to conflict with. Yet say not that any, or all of these are too strong for thy Lord: too hard for him to support thee under, and save thee from. O then, in all thy straits, difficulties, and trials, never, never forget thy Lord's question, Is any thing too hard for the Lord? "Remember the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are his everlasting arms. He will speak destruction to thy foes, and salvation to thy soul." Deut. 33:27.

The Lord we serve's omnipotent,
Let faith then trace his pow'r,
For that's engag'd by covenant,
To keep us ev'ry hour.

Whene'er strong foes do us assault,
And sin and lust do rage.
Lord, keep our souls from ev'ry fault,
And on our side engage.

OCTOBER 24.

The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he is their strength in the time of trouble. Psalm 37:39.

We may say of righteousness, as Job says of wisdom, "Where shall righteousness be found? And where is the place of perfect righteousness? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it to be found in the land of the living," (28:12, 13.) The Patriarch says, It is not in me. The Prophet says, It is not in me. The Apostle says, It is not in me. The Lord saith, "All flesh hath corrupted his way," (Gen. 6:12.) "There is none righteous, *no not one*," (Psalm 14:3.) Why then do the Scriptures speak so much of the righteous, if there be no such persons upon earth? Indeed there are. This is a point of great importance. The Lord settle it well in your heart and mine. We are guilty sinners in ourselves. We have no righteousness of our own. Yet, saith the Lord Jesus, the righteous one, "Their righteousness is of me," (Isa. 54:17.) We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, (2 Cor. 5:21.) When we are taught this by the Spirit of truth, instead of looking into ourselves for righteousness, we cry out in the joy of faith, I have found it. "In the Lord have I righteousness." (Isa. 45:24.) Then we have a living union with *the Lord our righteousness*, by faith. Being perfectly righteous in him, we have righteous hopes, fears, desires, a righteous walk, and righteous expectations. For we know our salvation is of the Lord. The Spirit of truth does not leave us to the unrighteous notions of salvation, on any condition of our own work, duties, and performances, either in whole or in part. But he shews us such matchless glory in our Lord's *one* everlasting

righteousness, that it puts us at once, both out of conceit with our own filthy rags, and prevents us from placing any dependence on them for salvation. The Lord increase our faith in this righteousness. Lord quicken our love to thee for making us righteous. So neither are we left to live in sin, and walk in sin. But though thus righteous, yet sin is in us, therefore we have our troubles. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Are we in trouble about the number of our enemies, the greatness of our sins and corruptions—the weakness of our graces—the strength of our temptations—a sense of desertion—the want of comfort, peace, and joy from the Lord? These are righteous troubles. The righteous Lord is our strength to support, under them—he has power to remove them. He neither wants strength of love, nor ability of power to save us from them. For the Lord delivereth the righteous out of all his troubles. Psalm 34:17.

Salvation is a joyful theme,
To sinners lost and poor.
While Lord, 'tis thine most glorious scheme,
O let us feel its pow'r.

OCTOBER 25.

The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:28.

Most gracious words to me, who am a poor sinner, and have nothing to bring to Christ, but an empty hand, to receive: most precious ransom for me, who have the sentence of death in myself. May faith be high, and self low to-night! The poor disciples were now wrangling about precedence and supremacy. What was the consequence? They were moved with indignation. They strangely forgot the end of Christ's coming, and the nature of his kingdom. God knows we are poor as beggars, yet proud as devils. The very same spirit works in us all, as did in them. Lord grant that the evil which occasioned these words, may be made a blessing to us. Consider, (1st.) Our proud notion of ministering to Christ. Some indeed did minister to Christ of their substance, (Luke 8:3.) But this was of natural things. Though empty of all good, and full of all evil, yet we vainly think, we can minister something to Christ of our spiritual substance, which shall be available towards our salvation. It is dreadful to have both pride and poverty! There is no character so despicable. Yet it is ours. But, (2d.) O wondrous love! Christ came to minister to our wants, and subdue our pride. He wants nothing from us. He bestows all upon us. He gives us to see our poverty, to hide pride from our eyes. He shows us our misery, that pride may not destroy us. He makes us feel our extreme indigence, that he may supply us out of his fulness. He ministers the grace of conviction, of our lost and helpless state in ourselves, that he may comfort us in conversion of our souls to himself.

But do I minister nothing to Christ for salvation? Poor sinner, thou hast nothing to minister, but a sinful body and a sin-sick soul. Is it so? Art thou sensible of it, and crying to him under it? Then Christ hath indeed ministered his Spirit to thee. Here is glorious comfort for thee. (3d.) Christ came to give his life a ransom for many. Even for ALL that the Father gave him, (John 6:39.) ALL such are known of God—known by Christ—and they too may know, that they are of the blessed number of Christ's ransomed ones. How? more surely, than if they heard a voice from heaven telling them so. "They shall come unto me." There is the most sure evidence. To come, sensible that we have nothing to minister to Christ, and to take the ransom of his death as our finished salvation, this is the faith of God's elect. All such was given to Christ, and shall eternally reign with him. Rom. 5:17.

To minister to our distress,
And save our souls from hell,
Came down the Lord our righteousness,
With love unspeakable.

OCTOBER 26.

Take heed and beware of covetousness. Luke 12:15.

It is said, if a person seeks for the philosopher's stone (which turns all metals into gold) with a covetous desire to be rich, he may be sure not to find it. We are sure, that precious jewel contentment, is not to be found in a covetous heart. Let philosophers and moralists reason ever so persuasively against the evil of covetousness, yet the love of money will rise superior to all. What mighty charms are there in gold! But the voice of our Beloved here speaks. His words are spirit and life. Hear then, O disciple, "take heed and beware." Consider, (1st.) This admonition of thy Lord. It is redoubled. "*Take heed: beware!*" Just as the loving parent, seeing his dear child running into the jaws of danger, cries out with vehemence, Take care! take care! Fix this in thy mind, there is great, very great danger here. Our Lord sees it. His love speaks with the utmost earnestness, that we may avoid covetousness. (2d.) What is covetousness? One gave a good definition of it. Being persuaded to leave off business, as he had got enough, replied, What is enough? It is a little more than a man has. Consider, (3d.) The evil of covetousness. That insatiable desire prevents present contentment, destroys thankfulness, yea, and keeps the enjoyment of Christ out of the heart. Can a covetous man be happy in God? No: no more than Dives could have been happy under the dreadful circumstances of Lazarus full of hunger and sores. Will any one ask, What harm is there in the love of riches, and coveting of them? St. Paul expressly answers, "A covetous man is an idolater," (Ephes. 5:5.) Is there no harm in that? Our Lord says, "Seek ye first,

(principally, chiefly, and above all other things) the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added," (Matt. 6:33.) Is there no harm in reversing Christ's command: putting a slight upon his kingdom of love, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; so as to prefer riches before it? Soul, consider, What is your profession? Are the unsearchable riches of Christ enough to satisfy your mind, or are they not? Can enjoyment of fellowship with Christ make your heart happy or not? Have you faith to believe this, or have you not? Does Christ here caution you to no purpose, where there is no danger? O lay this to heart. Cry to the Lord. Covetousness is natural to us. Lively faith in Christ will destroy it. For, it will enable the soul to say with St. Paul, "I am full and abound." Phil. 4:18.

Is Christ my portion and my share,
And can't I be content?
Beware, my soul to covet more—
Talents are only lent.

See, see the thousands who now run
In full pursuit of gold;
They give up Christ, and very soon
For gold their God they sold.

OCTOBER 27.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. Gen. 46:30.

Strange request! What, just come to the sight and embrace of thy long lost son, and yet want to leave him at the very first interview? One should have thought the language of Jacob would have been, Happy man! I not only see my beloved son, but also see him governor over all the land. Well, I hope I shall live long to enjoy his riches and grandeur. But, no. The good man had lived long enough to make an estimate of the uncertainties of life: to know the evil of days, the vicissitudes of time, and how soon the day of brilliant joy might be changed into the night of gloom and sadness. The sight of his son was the summit of his wishes: that granted, he sought no more. He wished to be at home with his Lord. Happy Christian! thus to set loose to all creature enjoyments, even when there is the highest enjoyment of them, than to have one's mind go out in longings after the heavenly world, evidences the spirituality of the affections. Many have manfully withstood the frowns of the world: but its smiles have caressed, enchanted, and hugged them to death. To choose death, to be with Jesus, when all things around are inviting and engaging, shews that Christ has the supreme affections of our hearts. Here see the nature of Christian faith. (1st.) It confesseth that Christ is come in the flesh: that, though he is dead, yet he is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death; and that he has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Therefore, (2d.) as truly as Israel rejoiced to see his beloved son, and could depart in peace—so

the believer rejoices at the sight of Christ by faith. A living Christ is the glory of a believer's soul. He can die easy, peaceful, and comfortable, viewing the death of Christ for his sins, and the life of Christ for his justification; and the intercession of Christ, prevailing for his eternal glorification. And this faith is somewhat more than a notion in the head; for, (3d.) it brings victory into the heart. For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4, 5.) It is impossible to overcome the world any other way, than by seeing greater glory and happiness in the Son of God than this world can bestow. But by faith we do it. Therefore, we exchange shadows for substance; baubles for jewels. O rest not in a dead faith, which brings not the glory of Christ into the heart, and brings no glory to Christ in the life.

Lord, having seen by faith thy face,
And felt thy precious love;
I long to feel thy rich embrace,
In thy bright court above.

OCTOBER 28.

Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Judges 7:2.

Thus the Lord reasoned with Gideon. He knows what is in man. He sees the pride of the human heart: how prone we all are to boast in an arm of flesh. The Lord is jealous of his own glory. Gideon's army of two and thirty thousand, is brought down to three hundred. By this handful of men, and no more, did Gideon gain the victory of the Midianites. The Lord's wisdom in this was, "Lest Israel should vaunt themselves, and say, Mine own hand hath saved me." But I have not transcribed the text right. There are two little words of great import, which I have omitted. Mind then, O Christian—*against me*. Now remember, whenever thou dost boast of thy power, thy free-will, thy human goodness, thy works, ditties, conditions, and performances in order to be saved, thou art then, as it were, two and thirty thousand strong. "Thou vauntest thyself *against the Lord*." Thou art glorying in thine own arm of might and power to save thyself, in some measure or degree. Thou art trusting to thy works to save thee, in whole or in part. Be assured thy Lord will bring thee down, and weaken thy numbers, that he may have the sole glory of thy heart, for saving thee. (1st.) The Lord proclaimed, That all who were afraid should depart. Two and twenty thousand returned. So he will proclaim the terrors of his just, holy, and righteous law in thine ears, and cause thy heart to tremble. Then shalt thou get rid of much of thy self-righteous confidence. It shall depart from thee. (2d.) He brought the people down to the water, and tried them by lapping. Here

also he reduced their numbers, to prevent their vaunting. So he will try thee, by lapping the waters of affliction. Here he will cut off the strength of thy vain confidence, and prevent thy vaunting thyself against him. Thus when thou findest the commandment come with power, and sin revive, then wilt thou die to self-confidence, and glory alone in the Lord. When the pruning knife of affliction has cut off the luxuriant branches of pride and vain-glory, then wilt thou say in deep humility, Wretch that I am, that I should trust in myself, and depart in heart from the Lord. I thank thee, my dear Saviour, for all the pains thou takest with my proud nature, to bring me to glory only in thee, and to say, "In God is *my* salvation and *my* glory." Ps. 62:7.

I'll trust my Saviour's word alone
To justify and save;
No grace in me, nor works I've done,
The smallest share can have.

Tho' poor, alas! I'm full of pride,
And prone to vaunt of pow'r:
Lord, humble, that I may confide
In thee *alone* each hour.

OCTOBER 29.

Wisdom is justified of all her children. Luke 7:35.

"O! could I but know, and be sure, I am a child of God, I should be quite happy. The want of this makes me very uncomfortable." Such is the language of many a doubting believer. Well, soul, here is a mark laid down: by it judge of thyself, and know thy state. Art thou a child of wisdom? If so, thou wilt justify wisdom. But what is wisdom? What is it to justify wisdom? (1st.) Thy Saviour is "the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:24.) He is not only wise to win souls, but is wisdom itself. He makes all his children wise unto salvation, by knowing him, "of God, made unto them wisdom." (1 Cor. 1:30.) Wisdom is here arraigned, and his ways censured by the calumny of fools. He is condemned as a licentious person; a sot; an epicure; a jovial friend, and companion of wicked sinners. If you are a child of wisdom, you will also meet with the same treatment from a carnal world and self-righteous men. If you dare openly confess salvation by the Son of God alone—free and full justification unto eternal life, by his blood and righteousness *only*, without your works contributing thereto, either in whole or in part, you will be condemned as a licentious Antinomian. Both the profane and self-righteous will unite, to proclaim you a friend to sin, and an enemy to all good works. Why? Because their carnal hearts were never under the constraints of Christ's love. Their licentious thoughts were never brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Therefore, their lips proclaim their ignorance, while they are opened against his truths. Now, you are called to justify wisdom, who has justified you. (2d.) How is this to be

done? (1st.) Hold fast, wisdom's truths in your hearts, as your chief glory, in opposition to all gain-sayers. So, (2d.) From a warm and lively sense of comfort by them, your lives will justify their holy influence. You will loudly proclaim to all the world, that, though you dare not attempt a single act, to justify your souls before God; yet you dare not continue in sin, because grace hath abounded. Your holy faith forbids it. The heavenly love of Christ animates to all obedience. Your glorious hope in Christ makes you ready, and obedient, unto every good word and work. For the grace of God which bringeth salvation to the soul, teaches all the children of wisdom "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." (Titus 2:12.) Thus we know, we have the faith of God's elect, and are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:26.

I know my soul is made alive,
By Jesus' mighty power;
For sin I hate, against it strive,
And pray to love Christ more.

OCTOBER 30.

Giving all diligence: add to your faith, etc. 2 Pet. 1:5.

Here is the Christian's work. All diligence is required in it. O believer, be assured (the Lord impress it upon your heart and mine) there is no being a lively, comfortable disciple, without it. Beware you do not add to your faith licentious notions and Antinomian sloth, instead of Christian virtues, holy tempers, and heavenly affections, which adorn our profession, and glorify our Saviour. Ever remember, you are called to honour Christ by your life on earth, as well as to be saved by and enjoy him in heaven. By faith we receive Christ, rest upon him, and look to him alone for justification unto eternal life. But a lively faith will not leave us barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If there be not an habitual disposition of soul, to add to faith, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, etc., we should examine and see to it; lest, instead of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, we have only a notion which floats in our heads. If so, this will only make us idle talkers; but not diligent workers and holy walkers. That we are guilty sinners, justified and saved by Christ *only*, is a truth which is ever to be held fast in the conscience. We can add nothing to Christ's work. To attempt to do any thing towards our own justification before God, is the basest act of unbelief. But faith is the queen of graces. She lives upon the King of saints. She will have a noble retinue to attend her. Let us never desire to get beyond this blessed rule of *addition*. Let us never *subtract* from it. Let us give all diligence to *multiply* more and more. Have we got into the *rule of three*? Do we know the love of the Three One

God?—the everlasting love of God the Father; the redeeming love of God the Son; the sanctifying love of God the Holy Ghost? Still we must never leave the rule of addition: add to your faith; but go on to all diligence in *practice*. Christ hath taught it: faith enjoins it; love constrains to it: Christ's honour and glory demand it. But beware of getting into *fraction*, as though any thing you do gives you a title to glory. But see, hence, the glory and spirituality of the gospel, and the reason why the belief of it is called, "our most holy faith." (Jude 20.) We are called by the faith of Christ to glorify God, by adding an obedient life to our most holy faith. This is our way in Christ: walk in it, and ye shall find rest for your souls from Christ. Jer. 6:16.

Add to my faith!—the sluggard smiles:
"I want no more than Christ:"
But him you want, for sin beguiles—
His truth you do resist.

Dear Lord, stir up to diligence,
To walk in all thy ways:
O! arm my soul with vigilance,
Which thou hast sav'd by grace.

OCTOBER 31.

He who lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 2 Peter 1:9.

It is hard to say, whether St. Peter here draws the character of a mere formal professor; or of one who has really tasted that the Lord is gracious, and has awfully backslidden. Be it which it may, it holds forth a solemn lesson of instruction to our souls. We may hence lay this down as a sacred truth, that whatever profession a man makes of faith in Christ—justification by him, hope of salvation through him; yet, if he is destitute of the graces of the Spirit, and the fruits of righteousness in his life, he is blind to the glorious end of the gospel of peace, and is a stranger to the purifying grace and pardoning love of Christ to his soul. Think of this. Pardoning love, purifying grace, and sanctifying influences are inseparable. Where there is the root of grace, there will be the fruits of righteousness. This is as natural as for any cause to produce its effects. But may not these words be accommodated to some, whom we have good reason to hope are the children of God, but are sadly backslidden from him? Do we not see awful instances around us? (1st.) He who lacketh these things, as virtue, knowledge, temperance, godliness, etc. not totally, (for there may be a partial lack of them) has sadly departed from the stedfastness of faith, and that degree of liveliness he once had; has left his first love, and has lost the sweet favour of Christ from his heart. Hence, there is a lack, in not abounding in these things. There may be true faith, and yet somewhat lacking in it. (1 Thess. 3:10.)

But such a soul is in sorrow, concern, and distress about it. So the life of grace manifests, that it is not quite extinct. (2d.) He is blind, not totally so; for he may see, but not afar off. He only sees himself, and his own misery and unprofitableness. This causes him to weep and bewail himself. But he cannot see; he does not enjoy the love of Christ, and the sweet peace of God. His sight is dimmed, and his comforts marred. (3d.) He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. He has lost the sense of pardon in the blood of Christ. Though he remembers there is such a thing, yet he has lost the comfort of it. It is to him, as though it had never been. Satan has obtained the advantage. So false prophets seek "to cause my people to forget my name, saith the Lord." (Jer. 23:27.) That is, the pardon and comfort of his name. Is not this an awful state? O, how much to be deplored! how greatly to be deprecated!

Ten thousand snares our souls surround,
To blind and to deceive:
With watchful care we should abound.
Lest we God's Spirit grieve.

NOVEMBER 1.

So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. 2 Peter 1:11.

Our last meditation was gloom and sadness. Here, the sun of comfort arises, and sheds splendour, glory, and joy upon us. O that we may this night enter by faith into the joy of our Lord! Come, Christian! it seems you and I must tarry a little longer on earth, absent from our Lord. How shall we employ ourselves? In studying the word of his grace: in being diligent in the use of means: in exercising ourselves unto godliness. What then? O blessed assurance! "So an entrance shall be ministered unto us *abundantly*." When? both in life and in death. (1st.) In life. We shall find a free and open door into the kingdom of Christ's grace, love, and peace, even *now*. We shall have the joy in the Holy Ghost, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, in our hearts. Thus, with the full sail of assurance, and the rapid tide of heavenly consolation, we shall sweetly and swiftly sail the voyage of life. All is enjoyed in being diligent in the ways of Christ. Diligence! working! labouring! etc. Why, (say some) all these are the very dregs of legality. Ay, so it would, if we had not the faith of Christ in our hearts, love to Christ in our souls, and the glory of Christ, who has fully justified and eternally saved us, in our view. Soul, thus press on. Mind not the Satanic grin, nor licentious sneer, of carnal professors, nor of legal gospellers. Legal! to live and labour in the kingdom of love? O, fool! say, did you ever expect to enter your Lord's kingdom any other way, than by Christ, who is the *door*? Do

you expect to enjoy the comforts of his love, and the assurance of his favour, in a walk and way contrary to his word and will? Are we not to walk in Christ, abounding in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love? Diligence of soul to enjoy his presence, and to be conformed to his image, is our delight below. To have every holy temper and heavenly disposition from Christ, puts the soul into a right frame to enjoy him. This is to have a constant and an abundant entrance ministered to us, into the kingdom of Christ. So living and abiding in his kingdom of grace and love, our souls grow dead to the kingdom of this world. We rejoice to think, (2d.) of an entrance into Christ's kingdom being abundantly ministered to us at death. Fellowship with Christ, and diligence in his ways, makes us think of death with pleasure, and familiarizes it to our mind with joy. By faith we see heaven open to admit us; God our Father, with open arms to embrace us; Christ to welcome us, and the Spirit to enable us to sing victory in death.

O! may I join the raptur'd lays,
And, with the blissful throng,
Resound salvation, pow'r, and praise
In everlasting song!

NOVEMBER 2.

Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. 1 Cor. 3:22.

“O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man who is at rest in his possessions; unto the man who has nothing to vex him, and who hath prosperity in all things!” O death, how sweet is the remembrance of thee, to a man who is alive to God, dead to the world; who longs to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; to see the glory of Jesus, and to reign eternally with him! Christian, here is a precious legacy left thee by the Lord: a covenant-gift from the God of thy salvation: “Death is yours.” He is your conquered enemy; your faithful friend. (1st.) Your conquered enemy. You need not fear him. He has neither strength nor sting. Christ, the victorious Captain of your salvation, has disarmed him of both. He can neither destroy nor wound your soul. Yea, “He hath abolished death.” (2 Tim. 1:10.) There is no substance in him; he is changed into a shadow. It is not the enemy death which seizes a believer, but the shadow or emblem of it, *sleep*. Weary soul, tired out with the burden of sin, lusts, corruptions, afflictions, accusations, temptations, etc.—is sleep an enemy to you? Do you dread sleep? Are you afraid of rest? What! fear to fall asleep in Jesus, to awake in his presence, to be satisfied with perfect likeness to him, and eternally enjoy him? O fools, and slow of heart to believe the victory of Christ over death! And thou too, O my soul! take thee rebuke to thyself, and be ashamed of thy folly. But I am not afraid of death, but of dying! Why afraid of sleeping? O! for the insupportable pains of the body in that hour. Who told

you they are insupportable? How many have sweetly sung, *victory in death?* O! says one, is this dying? O, it is sweet, it is pleasant. "Though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, thou shalt be with me." This is the claim of faith upon the warrant of the Lord. "When thou passest through the waters, / *will* be with thee." (Isa. 43:2.) The presence of the Saviour will beguile all thy pains, and fill thy soul with comfort. For, (2d.) Death is thy faithful friend. Hast thou not found sleep so to thy wearied body? Just so, and no more, is death to thy weary soul. It will at once deliver thee from all thy burdens and sorrows, and introduce thee into joys unspeakable and full of glory. Death is that, and no more, to the soul, than what God calls it in his word; and faith makes it to the heart. If you do really and truly believe that death is swallowed up in the victory of Christ; if you firmly believe his precious blood has atoned for sin, and his righteous life has fulfilled the law, you may undauntedly sing, "O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory?"

No more, O grim destroyer, boast
Thy universal sway!
To heaven-born souls thy sting is lost;
Thy night, the gates of day.

NOVEMBER 3.

If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Exod. 20:25.

This chapter abounds with legal terror. Here, the glorious Jehovah is giving the law with thunderings and lightnings, and the sound of a trumpet. The mountain smoking. Poor sinners, trembling and fleeing, saying, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." Most awfully tremendous! Well might St. Paul call it, "the ministration of death and condemnation." (2 Cor. 3:7, 9.) But blessed, blessed be God, it contains precious gospel-grace to law-condemned sinners. Here, rejoice, and say, Let God speak, and we live. For here is an altar commanded. God is accessible to us. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me." Here is gospel-grace. That beloved Son typified, who was made like unto us, and appeared in our *earthly* nature. Thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon it. "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29.) Yet, "we have an altar." (Heb. 13:10.) Christ is both our altar, our burnt-sacrifice, our peace-offering, and our Priest. In him, God is ever accessible to us, and we ever accessible to him. We lay hold of the horns of this altar. This is our refuge from a fiery law and inexorable justice. There, says God, I will come unto thee, and bless thee. Blessed be our God and Father, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. (Eph. 1:3.) If thou wilt make me an altar of stone, it shall not be hewn. See again the dear Mediator shadowed forth: "That stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands." (Dan. 2:45.) O how sweet, to see our Beloved in every line of revelation! Well might he say, "Search the Scriptures: they

testify of me." (John 5:39.) "If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." What can this mean? To forbid thy pride and arrogance. Though thou art a law-condemned sinner, yet pride and vanity work in thee. We are prone to think by our works, our art, our device, we are to add something of our own to this altar to render our souls acceptable to God. But this is to pollute the altar, Christ Jesus. This, the foolish, bewitched Galatians did. So some are said to crucify the Lord afresh. O beware of this spiritual pollution of the blessed altar, Christ. Know, we are perfectly and everlastingly accepted in him, without any work of our own. Believe this. Obey God; glorify him. Does the law convince of sin, and cut us off from all hope in ourselves? This blessed altar is of itself all-sufficient to fill us with all hope, joy, and peace. For this typifies, that new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for us, through the veil of his flesh, to draw nigh unto God. Heb. 10:20.

I other priests disclaim,
And laws and off'rings too:

None but the bleeding Lamb
The mighty work can do:

He shall have all the praise, for he
Hath lov'd, and lived, and dy'd for me.

NOVEMBER 4.

We believe, and are sure. John 6:69.

Here is both faith and assurance. I wish to the Lord I had them, is the language of many a doubting heart, while they have both this very faith and assurance. This assurance is of the essence of faith. Without it faith has no existence. Consider, (1st.) The nature of this faith and assurance. "*We believe and are sure.*" Of what? That their names were written in heaven, that they were sure they were the elect of God? No. But, says St. Peter to our Lord, "We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, and that thou hast the words of eternal life." Their minds were as sure of this truth, as of their existence. So must ours at all times, and under all circumstances. But is this faith and assurance? Then, blessed be God, I am a partaker of both. I do believe, I am sure, that Christ is the Son of God, and that he, and he alone, hath the words of eternal life. But I want to be sure of my own interest in the Son of God. Bless the Spirit for revealing Christ in the word, and revealing him in thine heart according to the word. Go on with thy present blessed faith and assurance. It will make Christ precious to thy soul. It will cause thy soul to cleave to him. Thou wilt say, "None but Christ." In due time, the Spirit will fully manifest thy interest in his love and salvation. (2.) Consider the blessedness of this faith and assurance. It was for want of this "many disciples went back and walked no more with Christ." (John 6:66.) It is by believing and being sure that Christ is the Son of God, and

that he hath the words of eternal life, that causes any poor sinner to follow him, to cleave to him, to call upon him, to hope in him, and to expect all salvation from him. Little as some may think of this faith, low as some may relate this assurance, yet our Lord honours it. He pronounces Peter blessed for it. He does not say, I believe and am sure that I am a child of God, and that my sins are forgiven. But, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" What says our Lord to this? "*Blessed art thou: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.*" (Matt. 16:17.) Rejoice, O believing soul ! thou hast a revelation from God thy heavenly Father, even whilst thou art doubting. All thy salvation depends on this truth. All thy comfort results from belief and assurance of it. The more steadily and confidently you believe and hold fast this truth in your conscience, the more solid peace, holy comfort and heavenly joy you experience.

Faith!—'tis a precious grace,
Where'er it is bestow'd;
It boasts of a celestial birth,
And is the gift of God.

NOVEMBER 5.

Therefore will I look unto the LORD: I will wait for the GOD of my salvation: My GOD will hear me. Micah 7:7.

Here is a soul exclaiming against the very worst of foes. "A man's enemies are the men of his own house." Under such experience, behold and imitate the conduct before us. Here are two acts of the mind, and the cry of faith. (1st.) *I will look*. The Lord is the object looked to. Blessed be the Spirit, he opens our eyes to see him, and our hearts to believe his love to us and care for us. Then we know the voice of Christ and obey it. He says, "Look unto *me*, and be ye saved," (Isa. 45:22.) Whenever distressed with enemies from within and without, sin, Satan, or the world, here is our warrant, to look unto the Lord. He assures us of salvation from them. We shall find and feel these enemies, to the end of life. Therefore looking unto the Lord, is to be the constant work of life. O the special mercy to have such a Lord to look to! Shame to us, that we look no more to him. Happy for us when we look to him only. We are sure of comfort from him, and safety by him, from all the power, malice, and fraud of every enemy. But I see enemies beset me. I am not saved from them. I grow impatient. Unbelief prevails. Doubts and fears arise. Here is the remedy. (2d.) "I will wait." Time will prove God's truths, Satan's lying suggestions, and the groundless suspicions of my own heart. "He that believeth shall not make haste." (Isa. 28:16.) It is, "the God of my salvation," I wait upon, and wait for. "My times are in his hand," (Psal. 31:15.) Every promise has its season for accomplishment. Every providence its hour. Every vision its appointed time. "To every

thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." (Eccl. 3:1.) O this waiting faith honours the Lord's word greatly. It has the Lord's word for its support. The Lord honours it. Behold his absolute precious promise to us. "They who wait upon the Lord *shall* renew their strength," (Isa. 40:31.) But this was not silent looking, and dumb waiting. For, (3d.) Here is the cry of faith. "My God will hear me." O the preciousness of faith! it claims the Lord, and makes a special appropriation of him. *My* God. Vile and sinful as I am: wretched and miserable as sin has made me: however beset and distressed with foes within, and enemies without, yet, O my soul, thou hast a covenant God in Christ to look to, wait for, and call upon. He will hear me. I am sure of it. For he put it into my heart to cry to him.

To look and wait upon the Lord,
Our priv'lege is most sweet,
For God his presence will afford,
And will with comforts greet.

NOVEMBER 6.

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST. Rom. 14:17.

How much did our dear Saviour bear, what pains did he take with his first disciples, to teach them the nature of his kingdom? Their notions were carnal and worldly: his kingdom spiritual and heavenly. We are just like them. Blessed be his name, the Lord is the same in patience and love to teach us also. There ever was, now is, and ever will be a cry with us, Lo, here is Christ. Lo, there is the kingdom of God. It consists in this external mode: that outward rite, ceremony, or institution. Just like those ministers, the dry-vines of this day, every subject they preach upon is to save you. If they preach, what is called a charity sermon, even the gift of money is to entitle you to God's kingdom. But what says our Lord? *Behold*, take special notice, "The kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:21.) It consists in nothing carnal, or external. Its blessings are inward, spiritual, and substantial. (1st.) Righteousness. This the devil robbed us of. Glory to Christ, he restores it to us. He gives us a better righteousness than we lost. We lost but a creature's righteousness, but we gain the righteousness of God's only Son: the righteousness of God and man in one Christ. Satan ruined us by sin, Christ saves us by righteousness. The kingdom of God is established in righteousness, upon the ruins of sin and Satan. The subjects of this kingdom are all righteous, (Isa. 60:21.) As we possess this kingdom in our hearts by faith, so Christ's righteousness is called the righteousness of faith. For we receive it by faith. We do nothing to work it out. It is the gift of righteousness,

(Rom. 5:17.) O how gloriously are our souls arrayed in the righteousness of the King of saints. Let us glory of this righteousness ONLY. For the more we believe of it in our hearts, the more we live in the spirit and temper of righteousness in our lives. (2d.) *Peace*. We were once at peace with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and at war with God. Now we are in his righteous kingdom, and righteous in his Son. We are at peace with God, and at war with them. "The effect of this righteousness is peace and quietness, and assurance for ever," (Isa. 32:17.) (3d.) *Joy in the Holy Ghost*. Being righteous in Jesus and at peace with God, the Holy Ghost gives us the joy of this. He teaches us to joy in all Jesus is to us, and has done for us. Yea, "he fills us with all joy and peace *in believing*," (Rom. 15:13.) Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear," Heb. 12:28.

Preserve, O God, from snares of sin,
Thro' my remaining days;
And in me let each virtue shine,
To my Redeemer's praise.

NOVEMBER 7.

My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. Psalm 63:8.

David was no advocate for the merit of good works. He ascribes no glory to nature's power and free-will. Free-grace Paul says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all." But he immediately corrects himself. "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," (1 Cor. 15:10.) So if David's soul followed hard after God, he gives grace the honour of it: "Thy right hand upholdeth me." This is the way both to improve and to enjoy lively frames of soul, to see and acknowledge the Lord's hand to be the cause of them. O it is delightful when the soul follows hard after God. For, (1st.) It implies such a discovery of the love and grace of the Lord, that the mind is fixed upon him, the heart drawn out after him, and the affections cleave unto him. The language is, "What is there upon earth that I can desire beside thee?" O, says the soul, "I am in his eyes as one that found favour," (Song 8:10.) Then, (2d.) Every thing appears mean and contemptible in comparison of the Lord. The world, with all its riches, honours, and pleasures, has lost its charms. Sin is abhorred. Satan is defied. The flesh is denied. The smiles and frowns of carnal men set at nought. Nothing but the enjoyment of the Lord's love and presence is prized. Therefore, (3d.) There is a diligent attendance on the means of grace. A conscientious discharge of duty, a delight in the exercise of every grace, believing in the Lord, looking to him, hoping in him, calling on him, loving, fearing, serving, and adoring him. O, says the soul, I will go under the word, who

knows but I may gain a greater knowledge of the love, peace, and salvation of my Lord Christ? I will go to his table, that he may meet and bless, and kiss my soul. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine," (Song 1:2.) This is living indeed. Living like oneself, as beloved of the Lord, following hard after him, reaching forward to him, "pressing towards the mark, for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 3:14.) O let us look more "to the right hand of the Lord. It hath the pre-eminence. The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass." O think on Stephen's vision. "He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God," (Acts 7:55.) We have the very same vision by faith; and the very same object to look unto every hour of life, and every step of our journey. This brings support to our minds, and joy to our hearts. "We endure, seeing him who is invisible," Heb. 11:27.

Inspire my soul with holy zeal,
Great God, my love inflame;
Religion without zeal and love,
Is but an empty name.

NOVEMBER 8.

Then said one unto him, LORD, are they few that be saved?
Luke 13:23.

Peter's fervent prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish!" was much better than this curious question. It was an unprofitable one. Suppose our Lord had given a direct answer to it, assured him there were but few that would be saved, and told him the exact number, what good would this querist have got by it? Learn hence, (1st.) that unprofitable questions are to be avoided. They proceed from a vain curiosity, and are proposed to gratify the itch of a speculative humour. Indulge no thoughts in thy mind above, beyond, nor contrary to what is written. They may amuse and perplex, but cannot edify thy soul. Observe, (2d.) the wisdom of thy Lord. He does not give a direct answer to this vain question, but improves it to general usefulness. As though he had said, Friend, thy question is impertinent. Thou art prying into a matter that concerns thee not! Thou hast a notion of salvation in thy head, and hast put a curious question from thy tongue, but thy heart is unconcerned about thy own salvation. Rather than answer thy unprofitable question, I will improve it to general use:—*Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* (3d.) Disciple, here is an admirable lesson for thee and me. Let us learn to improve every curious question into godly edification; nice and subtle distinctions, into practical and experimental conversation. You can scarce begin to speak of the grace of God and the salvation of Christ to poor blind sinners, but they will ask, Do not you hold the doctrine of election? I am persuaded, it would be best to follow our Lord's conduct. Give

no answer to the question. Set forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the deplorable state sinners are in, the absolute necessity of a Saviour: the matchless glory of his person, the riches of his love to sinners, the fulness of his salvation for them, and the need we have of faith in him, to be clothed in his righteousness, justified before God, and eternally saved by him. This, this is the way to instruct poor sinners' minds, and to warm and enliven our own souls. Dry disquisitions promote jar and discord. Let Jesus, the strait gate, be in our view. "Let us consider the end of our conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." (Heb. 13:7, 8.) Let us look to him every day and every hour, to save us from the deceitful pride of our hearts, the abominable wickedness of our nature, and from all our cursed lusts, which war against our souls.

This is our comfort, dearest Lord,
That *ev'ry* soul thou'll save,
Who comes to thee with self abhorr'd,
Salvation for to crave.

Tho' chief of sinners, Lord, I am,
Yet still I hope in thee:
O! suff'ring, loving, saving Lamb,
Save, save poor guilty me.

NOVEMBER 9.

And Israel said, It is enough. Gen. 45:28.

His soul seems fully satisfied with the Lord's dealings and dispensations. He could ask no more. There was a perfect calm in his mind. He sings a sweet requiem to his soul. Like David, when he says, "return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living," (Psa. 116:7, 8, 9.) Most precious resolution for such great bounties! Come, Christian, canst thou say with the hoary-headed patriarch, to-night, *It is enough?* What, could God have done more for me, which he hath not done? Could that one word, sounded in the ears of Jacob, "Joseph is yet alive," cause such transports of joy to rush so suddenly upon him, as to be too impetuous to be resisted? How should that blessed word, Jesus is yet alive, transport thy soul? Was Joseph governor over all the land of Egypt? The government is upon the shoulders of your elder Brother, Christ, (Isa. 9:6). All power in heaven and earth is committed to him. (Matt. 28:18.) He saith, "I am he who liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and death," (Rev. 1:18.) Is not here cause for thee to cry out, *Satis*, it is enough: I can desire no more? Surely, this is sufficient to cause thy dejected spirit to revive. Did Jacob believe, when he saw the presents of his son? Did he say, "I will go and see him before die?" O Christian, is thy Saviour ascended into his kingdom? Has he received gifts for thee, and poured down love-tokens upon thee? Has he given thee

repentance to turn to him, and faith to embrace him? What is thy language? It is enough. Jesus ever lives: eternally loves: incessantly prays. Then I shall surely see him, but not before I die. But I shall soon shake off these rags of mortality, and sing victory in death. Then, O then, I shall behold him, eye to eye, and face to face. Then I shall say, with highest rapture of soul, "It is enough." Then death shall be swallowed up of life, and I shall cast down my crown before the Lamb. O then I shall eternally see him, "whom having not seen I love: in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," (1 Pet. 1:8.) O that in the same Spirit with St. Paul may I ever say, "Doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," Phil. 3:8.

Too oft my wand'ring heart,
To foolish snares incline,
And so from Jesus I depart,
Then grief and sorrow's mine.

Lord, let thy love still reign,
O'er all my foes within:
Thee do I count my greatest gain,
O save me from all sin.

NOVEMBER 10.

He who receiveth me, receiveth him who sent me. Matt. 10:40.

It is very natural to think, if the Son of God were now upon earth, O how gladly would we receive him into our houses. If you really would, you now cordially receive the report of him, into your hearts: you now welcome it by faith, as the most precious truth that ever saluted your ears. (1st.) What is it to receive Christ? There is endless perplexity in the consciences of many poor sinners, whether they have received Christ—when they received him—what it is to receive him—how they received him—and whether they received him right, etc. Satan gets great advantage here over many. Therefore he stirs up many (who nevertheless may do it ignorantly) who sadly puzzle weak Christians with nice and subtle refinements, about receiving Christ. You would have no difficulty to tell, whether you receive a dear friend—how your heart stood affected towards him—and what reception you gave him. How is it between Christ and your soul? Do you see him, believe on him, and trust in him as a Saviour, just suited to your ruined, desperate, hopeless state? Bless the Holy Spirit for this. You have received Christ. Now, (2d.) Consider the blessedness of this. You have also received him who sent the Redeemer, that is, God the Father. He gave Christ for us, He sent Christ to us. And therefore, (1st.) God is now your loving Father in Christ. There is nothing but peace and love in his heart towards you. He is for ever reconciled to you. All his attributes are engaged for you. He declares, “I will be merciful to your unrighteousness: your sins and your iniquities I will remember

no more," (Heb. 8:12.) You are now safe from the curse of sin, the condemnation of the law, and the power of Satan, as though you were at his right hand. For your Father's right hand is your defence. If he stretch it forth to chastise and afflict you, it is all in love. O the joy of faith! For, (2d.) You are his righteous child *in* Christ. Though in yourself, you are sinful and miserable—have unholy thoughts—vile lusts—disagreeable feelings—the workings of unbelief—devilish injections, etc. These all spring from your flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing. These are common to all the children of God. Therefore think it not strange, that you are made to groan under a body of sin and death, from day to day. Let not these mar your comfort, nor prevent your joy, of being a perfectly righteous son or daughter of God in Christ. For, (3d.) You ever have all free access to God, and all holy boldness before him. Ephes. 3:12.

NOVEMBER 11.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the LORD. Job 1:21.

Meek Moses, righteous Lot, patient Job, were as wicked by nature as any sinners that ever were born. True, they were eminent saints. But who made them so? The same Saviour, who sanctifies you and me. Cease ye from man. Look upon the most holy saint, as a sinner in himself, but only distinguished by the grace of God. When any grace eminently shines in any sinner, remember it all comes out of the fulness of the Saviour. So look for grace for yourself. While Job suffers the loss of all, yet he glories in the possession of all. Thought he could not now say, *my children, my possessions, my health, etc.* yet he could say, "My Redeemer liveth," (chap. 19:25.) The belief of this sweetened every cross: made up every loss: kept his head from sinking in the deep waters of affliction: his heart from fainting under the greatest tribulations: and fortified his mind with the greatest patience, under the severest calamities. He saw his Lord in all, therefore by his grace he submits to all. Job is here set before us, as most eminent for his patience. To what end? That we might learn patience hereby? Remember patience is a grace. It is a gift from the God of all grace. We can no more derive patience from the example of Job, than we can get light and heat from a painted sun. View the saint, but look to the King of saints to be like-minded. "The Lord gave." Sweet consideration! Look upon all you enjoy as the free gift of a covenant God. Hold the giver fast, but hold the gifts with a trembling hand. Perhaps, ere to-morrow's sun, you may be

constrained to say of some of your sweetest enjoyments, "The Lord hath taken away." Love saw they would do you harm, and that it is best for you to be without them. Therefore in love, God takes them away. Love is always the same, in a giving, as in a taking God. Therefore, what good reason have we to say for both, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Here you see the work of faith. It sees the Lord's name written upon every enjoyment: it owns the Lord's right, to give, or take away: it bows to the Lord's sovereign will, and says, Lord, thou hast done all things well. Though what thou doest I cannot know now, yet I shall know hereafter. I am sure there is a Father's love and wisdom in all. O that all may be sanctified to me, and I profited by all. Thus, as faith in Christ brings us to the knowledge of God, as our loving Father, to enjoy peace with him, so it teaches submission to His will, and to bless his name at all times. Rejoice in the Lord.

NOVEMBER 12.

He who hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that GOD is true. John 3:33.

Wherein consists the essential difference between the righteous and the wicked? In this, the heart of the former receives the testimony of Christ, and thereby honours the God of truth. The latter rejects it, and thereby makes God a liar, (1 John 5:10.) No marvel then, that it is declared, "He who believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," (John 3:36.) And that "God is angry with the wicked every day," (Psa. 7:11.) Why? Because they every day live in this daring, provoking sin of unbelief of the testimony of the Son of God, and give God the lie to his face. This is the greatest sin under heaven. O the long-suffering patience of God, toward such stout-hearted rebels. Consider, (1st.) What is this testimony? It is the witness which Christ bears to the children of men, that he is the Son of God: that he came forth from God: that he came to fulfil the law of God: to honour the justice of God: to bring glory to all the attributes of God, by saving sinners according to the *truth* of God. (2d.) What is it to receive this testimony? Simply to credit it; just as one does by a person who in a solemn manner, gives a plain and faithful evidence in court, of what he knows of the cause on trial. Now, here we see, what a simple thing faith is. It is no other, than receiving Christ's testimony: believing him to be what he declares he is, the Saviour of lost sinners: righteousness to us, who have none of our own: an atonement for sins, which we must have been damned for without: redemption from the curse of the law, which we

could never avert: and the hope of eternal life, which we have forfeited. Thus we receive the testimony of Jesus as a relieve for condemned malefactors: an act of grace for outlawed rebels: a report of mercy for miserable sinners. But alas! How do we puzzle our heads and perplex our hearts? For instead of blessing Jesus for this precious testimony, looking at it, considering its suitableness, and deriving our comfort from it, we get to questioning our faith, whether we have received it and do believe aright. This is our folly. (3d.) See the blessedness of receiving this testimony. "He hath set to his seal that God is true." Or, as some read it, God hath sealed him (by his Spirit) because he is true. As we set our seal to God's truth, he will seal our hearts with his comforts. We cannot honour God more, nor please him better, than to hear and believe his beloved Son.

The testimony of Christ's love
Is full of joy and peace,
By faith it lifts our souls above,
And doth from sin release.

NOVEMBER 13.

The LORD is able to give thee much more than this. 2 Chron. 25:9.

Thus spake the prophet to Amaziah, king of Judah. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart," (ver. 2.) His works were externally right, but he was destitute of uprightness of heart towards the Lord. Our Saviour forbids, "Judge not according to the appearance." (John 7:24.) Be not hasty in judging of any one. Nay, not of thy own state neither, merely from a few external actions. Look well to thy heart. See that there is upright honesty and integrity at the bottom of thy conduct. If otherwise, it will soon be made manifest. So it was with Amaziah. This chapter records three abominable evils which he fell into. Confidence in an arm of flesh—Idolatry—Pride, which proved his destruction. As to the first, he hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valour, to strengthen his army against his enemies, for one hundred talents of silver, *i.e.* thirty-five thousand, three hundred pounds sterling. A prophet of the Lord is sent, to forbid his going to war with these hired forces. He takes the warning, but is concerned at losing so large a sum of money. The prophet adds, "The Lord is able to give thee much more." Had he consulted the Lord upon his expedition, he had saved his money. But he asked not counsel from him. O Christian, lean not to thine own understanding. Seek to thy Lord. Consult his will in his word. Beg for his direction in every enterprise. Otherwise, though the Lord may kindly send a messenger to thee, yet thou wilt suffer loss and gain vexation. If thou hast taken a wrong step,

do not obstinately pursue it. Better suffer the loss of any thing, than thy Lord's favour. Amaziah was wrought upon by the prophet's word. He sent back the hired forces, and gave up the loss of his money. O sweet word, the Lord is able to give thee more than this. He can, and he will repay every loss thou sustainest in doing and suffering his will. Does thy enemy fret and tease thee from day to day? Are thy violent passions ready to break out against him, and to revenge thyself upon him? O give up all. Give way to no unholy tempers. Be content to suffer for thy Lord's sake. Is not thy Lord able to make it up to thee? Remember he says, "Whatever ye give up for my sake and the gospel's sake, ye shall receive an hundred fold now, and in the world to come eternal life," (Matt. 19:29.)

My soul, count Christ thy greatest gain,
Who gave up all for thee:
His love and grace do ever reign,
From sin to set thee free.

Not one good thing will he withhold,
To make thee truly blest:
Against thy foes he makes thee bold:
O give up all for Christ.

NOVEMBER 14.

Art thou made of the king's council? Forbear: Why shouldst thou be smitten? 2 Chron. 25:16.

Horrid ingratitude! No sooner was Amaziah returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, but, instead of erecting an altar to the Lord of Hosts, who had given him success, he falls into idolatry, and burns incense to their gods. He went to war without God. He returns victorious, sets up idols, and forsakes the Lord. Vain confidence is departing from the Lord, and the first step to idolatry. Never think of a sin being subdued, a grace strengthened, or a comfort enjoyed, without giving all glory to the grace of Christ. Look at thy victories with humility. Know self to be as great an idol, as the gods of the Edomites. Though the Lord's anger was kindled against Amaziah, yet he is long-suffering to sinners. He sends his prophet to reprove him. He gives him a most severe sarcasm. "Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, who could not deliver their own people out of thy hand?" This is an instance of the greatest folly and madness. Wilt thou, O Christian, sacrifice to the goodness of thy heart, or burn incense to the pride of thy free will? Could these deliver thee from the hands of thine enemies? Nay, if the Lord had not restrained the wickedness of thine heart, and bowed the stubborn rebellion of thy will, they would have delivered thee into the hands of thine enemies, and eternal destruction had been thy doom. O constantly sacrifice to free-grace. Let the sweet incense of praise ascend from thy heart this night to the God of all grace, the Saviour of wicked-hearted, proud sinners! How does Amaziah behave under this sharp reproof?

Why, instead of falling under conviction, and repenting of his base ingratitude, and ridiculous conduct, he falls upon the Lord's prophet. Like Ahab to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" So he asks, "Art thou made of the king's council?" And he threatened him. O it is a dreadful sign, to be angry with a faithful reprove of one's sin! When the horrid consequence of sin is laid before us, it is a vain, foolish shift of the devil to ask, What! have you been in the Lord's cabinet-council? Or when the doctrine of God's electing love is spoken of; some foolishly demand, Are you one of the Lord's privy-council? No. But we know the Lord's mind concerning sin, grace, and salvation, in his word, without searching the records of eternity. There it is written as with a sunbeam. Impenitent sinners shall die in their sins, and be damned for their sins. All who are saved, it is by the free grace of God abounding to sinners in Christ Jesus.

Lord, soften this hard heart of mine,
Each kind reproof to feel;
And yield unto thy wise design,
To keep my soul from ill.

NOVEMBER 15.

Thine heart lifted thee up to boast. 2. Chron. 25:19.

How despicable, how contemptible does pride make a man look in the eyes of his enemies? Amaziah sets out with the first step to idolatry, confidence in an arm of flesh. He next falls into the most gross and absurd idolatry. Reproof leaves him under it. As he had forsaken the Lord, the Lord cast him off. His destruction is near. "A haughty spirit goes before a fall. Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." One sin brings on another. When the Lord leaves a man, he exposes his pride, and makes himself ridiculous. Amaziah, being flushed with success at his victory over the Edomites sends a message to Joash, king of Israel, saying, "Come let us see one another in the face." A challenge to war. Face me, if you care. Alas! he little thought that the Lord was departed from him, that he was given up to hardness of heart, and to seek his own destruction. How different his language from that of David, to the boasting Goliath, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts," (1 Sam. 17:45.) Joash, according to the custom of the Easterns, answers him by a proverb, "The thistle sent to the cedar, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and lo, a wild beast passed by and trod down the thistle." Intimating that there was as contemptible a comparison between Amaziah and himself, as between that low, base weed a thistle, and a tall stately cedar. However what Amaziah wanted in strength, he possessed in pride, which proved his overthrow. Christian, learn to know thyself. Be not high-minded, though thy Lord gives thee to tread down all the power of the enemy, yet he says,

“notwithstanding, rejoice not in this, that evil spirits are subject unto thee.” No. Why not? Is not this matter of joy? Doubtless. But take heed of vain glorying here. Beware, lest thy heart be lifted up to boast. The worst evil, pride, may be excited by the best of causes. Know thyself to be like that very contemptible thistle in Lebanon: that vile, prickly weed, in which dwells no good, and has no strength to stand against the foot of an enemy. But, the Lord points thee to incessant cause of joy. “Rather rejoice because thy name is written in heaven.” Therefore, the everlasting love of the God of heaven is fixed on thee. The invincible arm of the God of heaven is engaged to keep thee. And know, to excite thy humility, thou hast done nothing to deserve this. “Thou, O Lord God, art a God full of compassion, and gracious,” (Psa. 36:15.)

Is this a time for us to boast,
When sin within us dwells?
Forbid it, O thou Lord of hosts
For 'tis the pride of hell.

NOVEMBER 16.

Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone. Gal. 6:4.

"A day is coming, when the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," (1 Cor. 3:13.) O how much *wood* of pride, *hay* of self-love, and *stubble* of self-complacency, will then be burnt up; Yea, and it will be entirely owing to the rich grace, and finished salvation of Jesus (not for any work of ours), that our souls too, are not in that day cast into unquenchable fire. Why then does the apostle bid us prove our own work? That we may be joyful? Alas! says the convinced humble sinner, I have not a work that I dare look at, but instead of giving me joy, it occasions sorrow. "God be merciful to me a sinner." Lord be gracious to me, an unprofitable servant. Is this the confession of thy heart? Prove it by the word of God. Thou wilt find it agreeable thereto. Rejoice in thyself for it. Give glory to him, who taught thee to know thyself, and put into thine heart the language of grace. Thou art saved from self-righteousness and self-confidence. Rejoice in that. It is thine own work to believe, the power is the Lord's. Prove thy work of faith. Does it fix on Jesus alone? Does it work by love to him, to his rejected truth, his despised people, and his scorned interest and glory? Rejoice in thyself, but give all glory to Christ, who is the author of thy faith. Are the commands of Christ, as well as his salvation, precious to thee? Dost thou love and pursue holiness, knowing, in this way only, thou canst enjoy fellowship with Christ? Dost thou hate sin and eschew it, as contrary to the glory of Christ, the faith of thy heart, the peace of thy conscience, and the life of

thy soul? Rejoice in thyself. Thou art highly distinguished by the Spirit of truth and holiness. Thou art born of him, thou art a new creature in Christ. Thy grief and concern for thy sins and shortcomings, are evidences of the purity of thy heart. Though they lay thee low in humility, yet they should never prevent the abounding of joy in thyself. There is an essential difference between the humble joy of faith, in the heart of a poor sinner, and the self-righteous joy of a poor Pharisee. He rejoices, because he sees a difference between himself and others—that he is more righteous than others—has a better title from himself to God's favour and kingdom, than others. Hence he despises, and glories over poor sinners. The other rejoices in himself, for what he is to him, has done for him, and has wrought in him, in consequence of love-union. Hence his works spring from faith—are done in faith—and in all he desires to eye his Lord's glory; and while he has no confidence in the flesh, he rejoices in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:3.)

NOVEMBER 17.

The GOD of the whole earth shall he be called. Isa. 54:5.

An affectionate wife cannot bear to hear her loving husband traduced and spoken contemptibly of. It must hurt her mind. The church of the faithful, "is the Bride, the Lamb's wife," (Rev. 21:9.) Her Redeemer is here said to be her *husband*. These four names are given to him. Thy Maker—the Lord of hosts—the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth. Now if, after this, any should dare to deny, that Jesus Christ is not truly and essentially God, they must be quite blind, exceeding bold, and abominable wicked. Jealous of our dear husband's honour and glory, we cannot bear to hear him so vilely traduced and blasphemed. While we pity, we would flee from such, and take shelter under the wings of our *Redeemer*, and the protection of our *Husband*. The Godhead dignity of his person is the glory of our souls. The humility of his appearing in flesh, adds charms to his matchless beauty. Though he is our husband in our nature: our Redeemer incarnate: though we have free access to him: sweet converse with him: and are indulged with holy fellowship by him as MAN, still we honour and adore him, as "*The God of the whole earth.*" A poor sinner can never get near God in his mind, enjoy God in his heart, have any peace with God in his conscience, or comfort from God in his soul, but when he has simple believing views, by faith, of an incarnate God—God in Jesus, his Redeemer, and his Husband. And is he *thy Maker*? Then give him the glory of thy existence. Is he the *Lord of Hosts*? Then glory in him and rejoice, for thou art more than conqueror over all the powers of darkness and the hosts of

hell, through him who hath loved thee. Is he *the Holy One* of Israel? Then study to be like him, pray for conformity to him, walk in holy fellowship with him, so as to derive all holiness from him. Is he "*The God of the whole earth?*" Then be assured, that being married to him, and redeemed by him, thou shalt want nothing, which his infinite wisdom sees best to give: for his everlasting love will supply all. Live daily upon the fulness of thy *Husband*, and the grace of thy *Redeemer*. Behold your precious, free-grace charter. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Isa. 54:17.)

True faith will Jesus' Godhead own,
For faith's the gift of heaven:
Christ is God's co-eternal Son,
He's blest to whom its giv'n.

This is the God of the whole earth,
Christ is his sacred name;
We know this by our heav'nly birth,
And glory in the *Lamb*.

NOVEMBER 18.

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. Heb. 13:9.

The doctrines of grace are streams which flow from the fountain-head, the covenant of grace. They all lead to Jesus, the surety of the covenant. All doctrines that oppose the covenant-engagements of the Holy Trinity, for the salvation of sinners, are diverse, and strange doctrines. They direct to a different hope than Christ, and lead souls from the truth, as it is in him. With these diverse and strange doctrines, men may evidence great zeal for holiness and good works, while they have rooted enmity against the leading truths and capital doctrines of the gospel. Who talk more of holiness, and contend more for good works, than Arians and Socinians, and yet deny the proper deity of Christ? So many of another cast, carry their notions of holiness and perfection to the greatest height; yet vehemently oppose the doctrines of grace, election of grace, salvation by grace, justification by the righteousness of Christ, and the sure and certain perseverance of all his saints to eternal glory. We are in danger of being carried about, like clouds and meteors in the air, by the wind; so as to have our minds always fluctuating, wavering, and unsettled, by diverse and strange doctrines, touching our acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life.

But as a remedy against this evil, says the apostle, "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace;" with the

doctrines of grace, and with an experience of the grace of those doctrines. But this is not to be expected, if the doctrines of grace are not constantly attended to, cordially believed, and highly prized, as making the everlasting love and salvation of the Trinity precious to our souls. Some are all for warm affections, but care little for solid judgment. These soon grow giddy-headed. Others are all for doctrines, and aim only to have clear heads and a sound judgment; but care not whether the heart is warmly affected, and the life powerfully influenced. Such are like dry sticks in a garden, which support vegetables, but neither grow, nor bring forth any fruit to Christ's glory. O Christian, be concerned to have thy heart established with the grace of Christ, rooted in the love of Christ, and animated by the Spirit of Christ! "Built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Col. 2:7. This is the good thing which you should earnestly covet day by day.

Tho' men and Satan me perplex
About a thousand things;
Christ's word is simple and directs
Where hope and comfort springs.

Whatever tends to drive away
My faith and hope in Christ
Shall never with my spirit stay,
But boldly I'll resist.

NOVEMBER 19.

Good and upright is the LORD, therefore will he teach sinners in the way. Psalm 25:8.

Here are two characters the most opposite: a good and upright Lord—wicked and perverse sinners. Good and upright as the Lord is, he might justly damn sinners. But no, O condescending grace! He will not leave sinners to perish, in their ignorance and obstinacy: he will teach them. It is said of one, that after his conversion, he could scarcely mention the name of JESUS, without a tear. O had it not been for his redemption, no sinner would have had divine teaching! but all whom Christ has redeemed by his blood, the Spirit teaches by his power. This is his office in the covenant of grace. This implies, that so ignorant are sinners of divine truths, that no teaching besides the Lord the Spirit, can instruct and make them wise unto salvation. Come sinner, come down from the altitudes of thy fancied wisdom and boasted knowledge, and learn this humbling truth to-night. If thou seest thy own ignorance, and thy want of being divinely taught, rejoice at this declaration. Cry to the Spirit, Lord teach me. He *will teach*. Whom? Only such as are good and upright like himself? No, but such as are of a contrary character, *Sinners*: whose carnal minds are enmity against his holy law, who "are sold under sin, and in whose flesh dwelleth no good thing." Is this thy character? The Lord will teach such. *In the way*. What way? Not in the way of sin, that is contrary to his holiness. Not in the way of self-righteousness, that is contrary to his truth. But in the knowledge of Christ, who is the way: the way of access to God, acceptance with God, justification before

God, and everlasting life as the free gift of God, according to the covenant-grace and everlasting love of God. By repentance unto life in this way of peace, in this walk of faith, in this path of love, truth and holiness, the Spirit will teach redeemed sinners on earth, till he brings them to glory. His teaching shall be as effectual to their glorification, as the death of Christ for their salvation. Poor sinner, who like me, art often distressed and dejected with thy wicked nature, take comfort to-night from these two truths. Till Satan can blot them out of God's book, or make us worse than sinners, they stand on record for our comfort: "Christ Jesus came to save *sinners*." God will teach sinners, Look then to the finished salvation of Jesus. Look to the Spirit to teach thee the glory of it, to bear witness to thy soul of interest in it, and to fill thee with joy and peace by it.

When we consult with flesh and blood,
We quit the pow'r of faith,
And cry, the news of truth's too good!
Rejecting what God saith.

Saints, if you'd live and walk in peace,
Your reas'ning pride forego;
Look simply to the God of grace,
Whose pow'r can all things do.

NOVEMBER 20.

When the chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. 5:4.

St. Peter speaks with the utmost confidence of the appearing of Christ, and of his members being crowned in glory. Yes, he knew better than to make his Lord a liar. For if any one of them should perish in their sins, and by the force and fraud of Satan be dragged down to hell, then they would lose their crown of glory. But how then would the goodness of their Shepherd appear, if he suffered this? St. Peter never received, nor ever taught such absurd, unscriptural doctrine. He too well knew the unchangeable love of the chief Shepherd. He knew Christ could not be glorified, nor would his heavenly Father be satisfied, without each and every one, of his chosen, redeemed, justified, believing members, crowned in glory. He says, "I am the good Shepherd: I *know* my sheep, I give my life for my sheep," (John 10:11.) If but one of them was missing, he would search hell and the grave to find him, and to crown him. For, (1st.) Christ is our chief Shepherd. The sheep are all his own. (1st.) By the gift of his Father, (John 17:2.) (2d.) By the purchase of his blood. Our souls are bought with that precious price, (1 Cor. 6:20.) (3d.) As a shepherd, he calls us and gathers us to himself, by the grace of his word and the power of his Spirit. (4th.) He is, what no other Shepherd can be, and in this he is *chief* indeed to our souls. He is *our life*. Our life is not in our own keeping. It can never be lost or forfeited. It is in our Head: safe and sure, certain and eternal. Being in union to, and communion with Christ in faith, we now enjoy the earnest of glory, in the

spiritual blessings and comforts of this life. When we find our hearts holy and happy, it is because Christ is our life. When we groan under sin, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, it is because Christ is our life. Thus Christ, our chief Shepherd, appears now, in the spirit and life of our souls. (2d.) Christ *shall* appear. As verily, as he once appeared, as a mean man, and hung, as a vile malefactor, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; he shall appear to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who believe. But, says a poor sensible sinner, how shall I appear before him? I deserve ever to be banished from him. True. But, (3d.) You shall receive from him, a never-fading crown of glory. That dear hand which was nailed to the cross for you, shall be stretched forth to crown you. O Lord! is it possible? I am not worthy of this. True. So will you think to all eternity. Therefore you will sing, "Worthy is the *Lamb*," etc. Rev. 5:12.

NOVEMBER 21.

Judge O LORD according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity that is in me. Psa. 7:8.

What! is David become a self-justifier? Does he trust in, and depend upon his own righteousness? Does he plead it, even before the Lord, and expect justification by it? Hath he not elsewhere declared, "In thy sight shall no man be justified"? (Psa. 143:2.) Why then does he here talk of *my* righteousness? and why does he say, "The Lord reward me, according to *my* righteousness?" (18:20.) It was far from David's heart, to make his own righteousness the ground of his acceptance before God, or to place his hope of eternal life on it. He was a poor sinner. He knew it well. He confesses it constantly to the Lord. He declines it in point of justification, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine ONLY," (Psa. 71:16.) Why then does he here talk of his own righteousness? Let not this puzzle thy mind, nor pervert thy judgment, O Christian! You now also do the same, in the same sense. Consider, David is here speaking of false calumnies, and unjust against him by Saul, his cruel and unkind enemy. Hast thou not met with the same treatment? Has thy conscience acquitted thee of what has been laid to thy charge? Hast thou known, that thy hands were clean, thy heart pure, and thine integrity free from base imputation? Then thou hast a right to carry thy cause to the Lord, and to plead thy righteousness, uprightness, and integrity of conduct, in this sense before him: thank him for his grace which kept thee from doing, as thy enemies unjustly charge thee, and enabled thee to do what was just and right: and to

beseech the Lord to save thee from them, who unjustly persecute thee: to pity their cruelty before him: to pray to thy Lord for them. All this is perfectly consistent with thy faith, thy hope, and thy love. Study to profit by thy enemy's treatment. Cease ye from man. Like thy Lord, learn obedience by the things which you suffer, (Heb. 5:8.) Commit thy cause unto the Lord. "For all men have not faith." (2 Thess. 3:2.) A Christian's moral character should be held most sacred by him. Righteousness, integrity, and uprightness to all men, should ever be practiced by him, that the way of truth be not blamed on his account. O it grieves one to the very heart, when professors give cause to the enemies of Christ to say, See, here are your saints! they pay no regard to moral righteousness and integrity! Be careful to "give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed." 2 Cor. 6:3.

The rule of right, the way that's just,
O may I ever prize!
Tho' in my works I dare not trust,
Yet works faith justifies.

Dear Lord, I daily need thy grace,
Each duty to fulfil.
Blameless to walk before thy face,
Tho' charged with ev'ry ill.

NOVEMBER 22.

Come and see. John 1:39.

Thus replies the Lamb of God, to an inquiry after where he dwelt. How came these two disciples of John to make this inquiry? John had pointed them from himself, to Jesus, with *Behold the Lamb of God.* Just as though he had said, "Look at that dear man. Take special notice of him. He has a whole world of sinners to save. He loved them from all eternity. He is come as an innocent, meek Lamb, to be slain as a sacrifice for them. And his precious blood taketh away all their sins. You and I are poor miserable sinners. We have no object to look to, but that Lamb. Nothing can take away our sins; nothing can bring pardon to our hearts, peace to our consciences, and salvation to our souls, but his blood. Nothing can make us holy and happy here on earth, but, looking to, and living upon this *Lamb of God.*" They believed this. No wonder then, that they followed Jesus, and asked him, "where dwellest thou?" he said, *Come and see.* O what a sweet, free, and loving invitation is here! Just so it is now, that disciples are gathered to Jesus. His ministers preach of, and point poor lost sinners to him. They tell of the love of his tender heart, the virtue of his precious blood, and the lamb-like meekness of his nature, to receive every poor sinner who comes to him. Hence poor sin-sick souls, dejected, distressed hearts, and troubled minds, hear, are encouraged, and follow him. He turns and sees, and asks them, "What seek ye?" They ask him, where dwellest thou? Then saith Jesus, *Come and see.* Come, and live with me, upon all the fulness of grace, which I have for your needy souls. *Come and see,* all

the fulness of my salvation for your destroyed souls: the full atonement my blood has made for your sins: the glorious righteousness I have wrought out to justify your persons: the peace I have made on the cross for your souls. *Come and see*, that this is effectually and for ever done, and is fully to be enjoyed by faith. Hence learn, (1st.) There cannot an inquiry arise in a poor sinner's mind concerning Christ, but he has a meek and loving answer to give. He has compassion on the ignorant, and them who are out of the way. (2d.) Do we inquire where Christ dwells? He answers, *Come and see*. I the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, dwell also in your nature: I became flesh for you, that you may freely come to me, joyfully see, and richly partake of my fulness to supply all your wants, and all your need. (3d.) Here is a free invitation. *Come and see*. Without money. You have nothing to bring. Come, see, and enjoy all freely without money, and without price. Lastly, Jesus will soon say, *Come and see*, all the glory of my kingdom above. Glory be to thee, O Lord!

NOVEMBER 23.

Freely ye have received, freely give. Matt. 10:8.

Christ spake these words to his apostles. They had their commissions immediately from him, to preach his everlasting gospel. Many of the clergy, who pretend to be their successors, cannot receive this saying. Their learned lumber (because unsanctified) cost them too much to be dispensed for nought. Free-grace truths they cannot give freely. They have not freely received them into their own hearts. Expect to receive nothing from such unconverted ministers. Pity them: pray for them. Avoid their errors: be courteous to their persons. Private Christians, as well as ministers, have freely received out of the fulness of Christ: therefore, O soul! you and I are concerned in these words. (1st.) What have we received? the free favour of God; in the rich grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This comprehends all things from God: this includes all things in God. Have we repentance unto life? It is by his grace. Have we faith in, hope on, and love to Christ? All springs from the grace of Christ. Have we a new heart, spiritual affections, holy desires? The grace of God bestowed them. How? (2d.) *Freely*. Like the lilies of the field, which toil not, neither spin, to obtain their rich fragrance and beautiful tinge—the God of nature freely bestows both: so on us, he freely bestows the riches of his grace. Neither, by toil, could we perform conditions, nor by spinning fulfil terms, to entitle ourselves to it. We have freely received life from the dead; justification from condemnation: pardon from guilt; sanctification from unholiness; the assured hope of heaven from the dread of hell. O consider the rich and free bounty of

the Giver; the misery and unworthiness of the receiver; and say, art thou not bound to obey his command. (3d.) *Freely give*—thyself, thy whole soul and body, gifts and abilities, time and talents to God, the justifier; to Jesus, the Redeemer; and to the Spirit, the Sanctifier. Freely give the hatred of thy heart to thy sins, the abhorrence of thy soul to Satan, contempt of thy spirit to a vain world, love to thy brethren in Christ, pity to thy fellow-sinners, good will to all men, and food to thine own soul daily, from Christ and the word of his grace. This is the sweet exercise of faith, through the power of the Spirit. Thus free grace operates upon new-born souls. "They gave their own selves unto the Lord." (2 Cor. 8:5.) O the power of this truth! "Christ gave himself for our sins." Gal. 1:4.

Lord, I am thine, redeem'd by grace,
I freely give myself to thee:
By pow'r divine I seek thy face—
How matchless is thy love to me:

Let free-grace love be all my boast,
For worth and worthiness I've none:
I feel that operates the most,
To love the Lord for all he's done.

NOVEMBER 24.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. Isa. 42:1.

Angels reproved disciples of old with, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11.) How much do we deserve this reproof? Why stand ye gazing upon the vanities of the earth? Soul, what art thou looking at? What is the object of thy intention tonight? Be it what it may, God calleth to thee, and demands audience of him, and attention to him. It is for your comfort and his glory. The Majesty of heaven speaks to sinful worms of the earth. *Behold.* Take off your eyes and thoughts from every object; be all eye, ear, and attention to me. Ye poor, miserable, law-condemned, sin-distressed souls, look at, and take special notice of *my servant*. Wonder, adore, rejoice, and love. My beloved, my co-equal Son, who is Lord of all, becomes man, takes on him the form of a servant, to do my will perfectly, and to finish your salvation completely. *Whom I uphold.* Carnal reason bow. Satanic pride avaunt. High thoughts submit to faith's mystery. Not a God upheld by a God: but a perfect man upheld by a perfect God. Christ, as perfect man, was too weak to sustain the ponderous load of a world of sin; and to support the suffering of divine wrath, in atoning for sin and satisfying divine justice. Therefore, all the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily, to uphold his manhood. O sinners, in your precious Saviour behold the man: adore the God. *Mine elect.* Christ was chosen to the office of God's servant and our Saviour. Chosen in the eternal council and covenant before time, to assume human nature in the fulness of time. *In whom my soul delighteth.* Says St.

John, "We know that we are of God," (1 John 5:19.) How? By this sure mark, this infallible evidence, we are of one mind with God. Doth God's soul delight in the person and work of his beloved Son? So do ours. Is God's soul delighted, that Christ hath satisfied his justice, magnified and made honourable his law, and finished salvation for miserable sinners? So are ours. Then, as surely as our souls delight in Christ, the Lord's soul delights in us. We are called Hephzibah, that is, the Lord's pleasure is in thee. Thou art married to him. His soul delighteth over thee. (Isa.62:4.) He hath given his Spirit to thee: for, says Christ, he shall receive of mine, my love, my atonement, my redemption, my righteousness, my salvation, my resurrection, ascension, and intercession, and shall shew it unto you. Thus he shall glorify me in your eyes and in your hearts. John 15:15.

God calls, my soul attend,
Behold his precious Son,
In form of servant he did send,
Salvation work he's done.

This is the joy of faith:
This is the spring of love:
Behold this to thy latest breath,
Till thou shalt sing above.

NOVEMBER 26.

Let me see the king's face. 2 Sam. 14:32.

Beloved Absalom was now in a state of exile from his royal father. He had shed his brother Amnon's blood. The king was enraged against him. Though he suffered Absalom to return to his house at Jerusalem, yet says he, "Let him not see my face." Still there was love, great love in David's heart, towards his son. Thus, O believer, thy heavenly Father may hide away his face in anger, because of thy provocations. That's thy hell. But his love never abates. It is always the same towards thee, from everlasting to everlasting. That's thy heaven to know. Was it not so, hell had long since been thy portion and mine. O think of, believe in, rejoice for everlasting, unchangeable love: love, that will never be wearied out by thy sins, till it hath brought thy soul, where sin and sorrow shall be no more for ever. But, was Absalom quiet and easy, to return to his house at Jerusalem? No, amidst all his enjoyments, there was a fly in the pot; his mind was corroded: his heart unhappy. Why? The king would not see him: and as though he had but this one desire in his soul, and all other enjoyments were nothing without this, says he, "*Let me see the king's face.*" He could not rest till this request was granted him. Some folks are very fond of having their fortunes told. O soul, dost thou desire to know thy state? Thou mayest very easily know tonight, whether thou art in the way to heaven or hell. Is it the one desire of thy soul, to see the king's face? the face of the King of kings—the King of saints, the friend of sinners? Is thy soul restless and unsatisfied without this sight? Though surrounded with all that heart can wish, yet art thou saying?

“Lord I cannot live at a distance from thee, without the smiles of thy love, the sight of thy reconciled face in Jesus. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and I shall be whole: quite happy and comfortable. The light of thy countenance will make me exceedingly glad. In thy smile is heaven: in thy frown is hell.” Here is a blessed and sure evidence, that thou art a child of God. Here is the proof of thy faith, and the regeneration of thy soul. It is disposed to God: as a loving desire, an earnest pressing after, enjoying the comforts of his Spirit: a sight of his face, and a sense of his love. You will not, you cannot, rest upon doctrines of grace, without experiencing the grace of the doctrines in your heart: not to be satisfied with believing the everlasting love of God, without feeling it shed abroad in your heart, by the Holy Ghost.

My gracious Redeemer I'll love,
His praises aloud I'll proclaim,
And join with the armies above,
To shout his adorable name.

NOVEMBER 26.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. Heb. 11:30

Doubtless, this story has been food for the profane wit of scoffing infidels. To see Joshua and his army, with seven priests blowing rams' horns, marching round Jericho, once every day and on the seventh day, seven times—what could the men of Jericho think? Doubtless, that it was the foolish parade of a set of weak-headed men. Had they told them, Behold, on the seventh day's blowing of the rams' horns, the strong walls of your city shall fall down at our shouting, without any human power; they would have laughed them to scorn, as a set of dreaming enthusiasts. The obedience of faith is the scorn and ridicule of carnal men. What of that? Our Lord was pleased with it. They had his word for their warrant. They believed his word. They did as he commanded. The event was as he promised: the Lord soon made it manifest, who were the fools and madmen, But, (1st.) why is it said, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down?" Was not this effected by the power of God? Yes: but it was according to the faith of the Israelites: and agreeable to the word of God, which was the ground of their faith. Divine faith and divine truth are inseparable. So it is said, "By faith we are justified, and have peace with God." (Rom. 5:1.) "Yet it is God who justifieth." (Rom. 8:33.) Faith hath no more hand in procuring justification, than the Israelites had in throwing down the walls of Jericho. The righteousness of Christ solely obtains this for us. But as they did, so we do by faith—shout, Christ and salvation. All opposition from sin and Satan fall before us. We see the kingdom of heaven open to us. (2d.) Here was

the obedience of faith. Though, to carnal sense and reason, the means commanded were even ridiculous, yet they obeyed. Study the Lord's word: obey his will: attend his ordinances: look to the Lord for the promised blessing. (3d.) Here is the patience of faith. They encompassed the city seven days, and repeated their work. O Christian, be not weary. Hold on and hold out, till the seventh day, the sabbath of thy eternal rest comes. Says Bishop Hall, "A good heart groans under his infirmities, fain would be rid of them: strives and prays: but when he hath done all, until the end of the seventh day, it cannot be." But, (4th.) at God's time, the walls fell: not one moment sooner. His word cannot fail. So, believer, at God's appointed time, (you are immortal till then) shall your body, the prison walls of your soul, fall. O then, faith may shout, "for there remaineth a rest for the people of God." Heb. 4:9.

Faith looks at God's omnipotence,
Consults not reason vain:
Soars far above our sight and sense,
And brings us precious gain.

Increase our faith, thou dearest Lord,
That we may shout thy praise,
Get daily comfort from thy word
Of pardon, love, and grace.

NOVEMBER 27.

He received from GOD the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 2 Peter 1:17.

These words furnish poor sinners with matter for sweet meditation. Spirit of truth, help us to see the honour and glory of the Father and Son in them, and to get comfort from them. Here is, (1st.) a silencing answer to that objection: you rob the Father of his honour and glory, by ascribing so much to the Son Jesus. Have you never been assaulted with this temptation? It comes from the enemy of God and sinners. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? But God and we are agreed. Our faith puts all the honour and glory of our salvation upon God's beloved Son. There God himself puts it. IN his beloved Son, God is well pleased, and with us also IN him. (2d.) Here see the nature of faith. It causes the soul both to imitate and obey God, and to be well pleased with what God is, the dear Man, his beloved Son. (3d.) Though, to the eye of nature, Jesus appeared as a mere man, in abject poverty, contemptible meanness, and lowest abasement; yet the Father gives him the highest honour and glory, because he magnified his holy law and made it honourable: satisfied his divine justice, and brought everlasting honour and glory to every attribute and perfection of his nature. So that now, "God is just, and the justifier of sinners who believe in Jesus." Then, under a sight and sense of your ruined nature, innumerable sins, and dreadful apostasies from God, put honour and glory upon the Son of God this night. His work and salvation, God is well pleased with. It has satisfied

heaven for all thy sins: let thy conscience be satisfied with Jesus, and glory of him and in him alone. For thy encouragement herein, (4th.) consider St. Peter, who wrote these words. He was honoured to be on the mount: saw his Lord's transfiguration: heard these words from the excellent glory—and yet, O shocking to think of! this same Peter, with horrid oaths and curses, denied that he knew the man, whom God the Father had so lately honoured and glorified. Yet there was an inexpressible fulness of grace in Jesus for him. Out of Christ's fulness, Peter received grace upon grace, whereby he was recovered from his fall, restored to repentance, and preserved to salvation. O may the dear Saviour look our hearts into godly sorrow and holy love, that we may say, "This is my beloved Saviour, in whom I am well-pleased."

If God in Jesus is well pleas'd,
Such glory to him gave,
We ne'er can honour Christ too much,
Who came our souls to save.

O, Lamb of God! we lift our eyes
Up to thy gracious throne:
Grant us thee daily more to prize,
And call thee, Lord, our own.

NOVEMBER 28.

I say unto all, watch. Mark 13:37.

It is very awful, when God's precious promises are opposed to his righteous commands. Hence some get above and beyond duty: they cannot bear the word *duty!* O say they, don't tell us of duty, it is such legal stuff! We are at liberty. We are not under the law, but under grace. True, indeed they are at liberty, but it is to pervert the gospel. They are awfully under the law of sin; not under the law of love, but the spirit delusion. Their ears are closed, and their hearts shut against the sweet voice of our loving charmer, Christ. O my soul, watch against such, and their licentious notions of liberty, as you prize the love of Christ, and sweet communion with him. He who sees no danger, and thinks he has nothing to lose, will give no attention to this command, *Watch*. It is here opposed to sleep. Sin is not dead. Satan never sleeps. The world ever invites and enchants. All is war against thee. Therefore, thy Lord in love calls unto thee, *watch*. And you have a most treacherous, most deceitful, and desperately wicked foe within, who ever takes part with your enemies without, even your heart, "out of which proceeds all evil," (Matt. 15:19.) There is not an evil in our thoughts, in our tongue, or in our life, but what is first hatched there, and springs from thence. If there was no evil within, there would be none without. Satan finds something within us to work upon, or we might bid him defiance. We cannot say as our Lord did, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me," (John 14:30.) No, but we have, as St. Paul had, an evil nature, "flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing," (Rom.

7:18.) O then, watch continually over the motions of your wicked heart and evil nature. Watch against high thoughts, which spring from pride: against carnal reasonings, which exalt themselves against thy Lord, and his truths, and tend to rob thee of thy peace, thy hope, and thy joy. Watch against that vile offspring of pride and carnal reason, cursed unbelief. O this is a many-headed monster. He will suggest, that truth is fiction: the way of holiness, folly; and the paths of sin delightful. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," (Matt. 26:41.) Join prayer to watching. The diligence and number of our enemies should urge us to watch, that we be not surprised: our weakness and proneness to presumption, should make us pray to be powerfully strengthened. For though the devil takes part with all evil in us, Christ takes our part, and is before the throne *for us*. Heb. 9:24.

My soul, be ever on thy guard,
Still watch and keep thy armour on,
Be ever looking to thy Lord,
And know thou can'st not stand alone.

O may I ever hear thy voice,
Jesus, thou Captain of my soul,
So live and walk, as to rejoice
In grace which does my pow'rs control.

NOVEMBER 29.

I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Rom. 7:9.

Would you read the best experience of a true believer in Christ, that ever was written? Here it is in this chapter. Try your own. Judge of others by this. Commend me to a holy, humble Paul's experience. If we are taught by the same Spirit, ours will answer to his, as face does to face in a glass, in the following particulars. (1st.) A sense of sin will be revived in the conscience, which no human palliates, or lulling opiates can keep in a swoon any longer. You will so see, feel, and be sensible of its dread and terror, that you will confess yourself to be totally destroyed by it, and your case to be quite desperate under it. (2d.) This is effected by the law. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20.) "When the commandment came." That is, when the purity and spirituality of the holy and perfect law of God comes into your heart and conscience, then you see that it requires truth and perfection of obedience in the inward parts, as well as in the outward walk. You see you have it not: you find it is as much impossible for you, a sinner, to fulfil God's holy law, as it is for you to create a world. Then, (3d.) you die. You become as a dead man. Seeing the exceeding sinfulness of sin in you, and the dreadful curse of the law hanging over you, all hopes of life forsake you. Sin and the law live within you. They pierce your soul to the quick. The law adds strength to sin. You can no longer flatter yourself, that your state is good, that you can do any thing to bring yourself upon good terms with God. You have now done with all works of righteousness to that

end. You can have no more hope upon your obedience to the law, than from your transgressing against it. You see yourself sin in all that you are, and in all that you do. But, (4th.) the hand of the Comforter is in all this. His loving design is to bring you to live by the faith of the Son of God. Instead of looking to and living by your own righteousness, you are to live wholly and solely upon his life, and by his righteousness. But while alive without the law, and striving to fulfil the law, you reject Christ—slight his righteousness—think your own better to trust in than his. Now the Spirit keeps alive sin and the law in you for this very purpose, to make you wretched in self and happy in Christ. All experiences that do not effect this, are not worth a straw. Christ, is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one who believeth. Rom. 10:4.

When dead in sin, I was alive
And strong in legal confidence;
But Christ who lov'd me would not leave
My mind to rest on such pretence.

Think, O my soul, with grateful joy,
When legal terrors thee distress—
Christ sav'd thee from the fi'ry law
By his own death and righteousness.

NOVEMBER 30.

Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Heb. 13:5.

Preach contentment to a covetous carnal mind, and you will just have the same success, as if you bid the surging billows to be calm, or the boisterous winds be still. He possesses nothing which can give true contentment to his mind. Has he riches? they are a curse to him: for he himself is under the curse of the law. O believer! was not this, in a certain sense, your case also? You stand in need of this exhortation—"Be content." You are the subject of a carnal nature, that is under the curse of the law: for that is ever dissatisfied, craving for more, murmuring against the dispensations of the Lord. Know and consider this. Be humble: be watchful. Consider, (1st.) what good things of this life you have. Be they little or much, do you deserve them? Have you a right to challenge more from God, the giver of them? Here set your foot, and let conscience answer nature's cravings. (2d.) Consider what spiritual things you have. (1st.) You have the everlasting, unchangeable love of a covenant God and Father fixed on you. (2d.) The life, death, and intercession of God the Son, for your righteousness, atonement, and salvation. (3d.) As a consequence of this, and that you may know and be sure of this, the Spirit has bestowed his graces upon you. Hence you have faith in Christ, hope towards God, love to him, delight in him, a heart to cry to him, a will to please him, a desire to walk holily before him. And, (4th.) to encourage and enable to this, you have all his precious promises in Christ. These are the stuff of your faith, the support of your hope, and the joy

of your soul. What want you more? St. Paul sums up all in one word: "*All things* are yours." (1 Cor. 3:22.) Is not this enough to make you content? No, say you: I find myself such a vile sinner, I am afraid I shall forfeit all these things. So you would before the next setting sun, if you stood in yourself: but you are in Christ. Therefore, here is a covenant promise from a faithful God for you: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." This is a most precious word for you: fasten upon it: draw comfort, derive contentment from it. Some who spoil texts, and mar comforts, cry, O! this regards things of this life only. Well, surely, if God loves his people's bodies, he will never forsake their souls. And to silence all the cavils of unbelief, the words run—No, I will not leave thee: no, no, I will not forsake thee. Here are five negatives. "Be not faithless, but believing." John 20:27.

With such a promise in my heart,
My soul, cleave close to God:
Cause all base murm'ings to depart,
Which do gainsay his word.

Content is to be found in God,
In nothing else beside;
He'll ne'er forsake us through the road,
But to the end will guide.

DECEMBER 1.

These all died in faith. Heb. 11:13.

An officer in the Navy, who held me exceedingly in derision on account of religion, was taken dangerously ill. To my great surprise, he sent for me. I found him in distress of soul: spoke freely to him of our lost estate, of Christ's love and salvation, and prayed with him. He wept sore: clapping his hands to his breast, he cried out, "O, my God! have I got a soul?" As though he had never known it before. Turning to the place where I kneeled, he said, "Where have I lived, that I never heard these things before? O I shall never forget what I have heard this night!" I visited him to his last moments, and trust he died in the faith, and hope to see him in glory. "Heaven is a house full of the miracles of Christ's free-grace," says one. There is the once idolatrous Manasseh; the murdering, adulterous David; the persecuting Saul; the Christ-denying Peter, etc. O my God, shall wretched I be there? Yes, if I die in the faith of Christ. My vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness do but, as it were, qualify me for Christ and his free grace. Christ, by his free grace, qualifies me for heaven. See the nature of this faith. (1st.) It looks to precious promises. Though seen afar off; yet it brings assurance of their existence into the mind, and the soul embraces them. O Christian, when you complain of your faith, you forget the great and precious promises, which are the ground and support of it. (2d.) It not only eyes Christ in the promises, but it receives Christ, "In whom are all the promises, yea and amen, to the glory of God." (2 Cor. 1:20.) O when Christ dwells in the heart by faith!—What then? (3d.) We confess

ourselves strangers and pilgrims in the earth. We see we have a heavenly inheritance: we are only passing through this world to it. This world is not our home. We are not of the world. Our hearts are above the world. Our souls long to be at home with our Father, God; our elder Brother, Christ; and our brethren in glory. For, (4th.) with Abraham, we see the day of Christ. He saw the first coming of Messiah, long before his advent. We see by faith his second coming, to take us to himself in glory: hence we rejoice. (5th.) Consider the comfort of living, and the joy of dying in this faith. It realizes heaven and glory to the soul. *Hope* is its constant attendant. By faith and hope in the promises, *love* springs up in the heart to the Promiser. Thus the sinner is fit for the enjoyment of God. Die when he may, he dies in faith—dies in the Lord, and shall live eternally with the Lord. “By grace ye are saved, through faith.” Eph. 2:8.

‘Tis sweet to live by faith in Christ,
In peace with God above:
False hope and sin we do resist,
For faith does work by love.

Soon we must die—then we shall prove
The precious joy of faith,
Safely in everlasting love,
To breathe our latest breath.

DECEMBER 2.

The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD. Acts 3:19.

Who shall these times come to? Every sinner that repents and turns to Christ for salvation. From whence shall they come? From the presence of the Lord. Here then it is manifest, whether you have repented and turned to the Lord. If so, (1st.) your soul will delight in God's presence. (2d.) You will earnestly long for and highly prize these refreshing seasons. (3d.) You will say with David, "Thou art my God; my times are in thy hands. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be continually in my mouth." (Psa. 31:14, 15.—34:1.) Hence, (4th.) you will turn from your sins, your self-righteous hopes, carnal pleasures, and worldly vanities, to seek all your happiness in the enjoyment of the presence of the Lord. And, (5th.) you will wait in the patience of faith, for the coming of refreshing seasons, believing they shall come. Is it now a night of gloom and sadness? Are we tried and afflicted, bowed down and dejected? Is the sun of comfort set? Does the moon withhold its shining, and the stars their light? Yet times of refreshing *shall* come. Believe this: hang on this word: bless the Lord for it. That dear *Comforter*, who brought us to Christ, will refresh our souls with a sense of the love of Christ, the peace of God, and the joys of the heavenly world. He will refresh us with his witness to our hearts, that we are the children of God, and heirs of glory. He does keep up in our minds a constant sense of his precious truth, that Christ is both an able and a willing Saviour to us; that he calls our weary labouring souls to him, and promises to ease and

refresh us. This is refreshing to our hearts. Is sin our burden? Do we want rest? Are our souls troubled for want of peace? Are our spirits distressed for want of refreshment? Christ says, Come unto me. But the most precious times of refreshment shall soon come. Yet a little while, and we shall behold and be in the eternal enjoyment of the presence of the Lord. O, a lively view of this by faith is most refreshing indeed! Then, we long to be absent from the body and present with the Lord: we are sick of the world, sick of ourselves; we triumph over sin and Satan, smile at death, and welcome its approach. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee." (Psa. 39:7.) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. Titus 2:13.

Tho' sin and sorrow bow me down,
And my dear Lord delays;
He will refresh my spirit soon,
With tokens of his grace.

Therefore, I'll wait, and look, and pray,
And not from him depart:
His presence makes a happy day,
And fills with joy my heart.

DECEMBER 3.

Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine. 1 Tim. 4:6.

Many a soul is saying, Alas! I hear and hear again, and do not see that I am profited. I obtain little or no comfort from what I hear. Consider, (1st.) what you hear. Is it the words of faith, and of good doctrine? There is more danger in words than we are aware of. Words convey corrupt ideas to the mind, and nourish vain hopes and false confidences in the heart. They subvert the promises, and pervert the soul. Many words of this sort have obtained amongst us. Such as the merit of works—perhaps you start at that. You would not hear preachers who use the phrase. But these amount to just the same thing, *the terms of the gospel—the conditions of salvation*. These are not the words of faith, nor of good doctrine; not the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. They are the words of man's proud wisdom. They were hatched in the church of Rome, and are contended for by the greatest enemies of our Lord's divinity, his atonement for sin, and justifying righteousness. One of this stamp in our day, says, "he longs to pull down that idol, Christ, from his throne." It is well if he does not plunge into hell in the attempt. The notion of terms and conditions of salvation swells sinners with pride, nourishes them up in self-complacency and self-righteousness: they tend to obscure the glory of the finished work of Christ, the freeness of gospel grace, and the need of the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, (2d.) avoid such preachers who contend for these phrases. Seek and attend those, who follow the example of an old, a very old preacher. He had true wisdom. Therefore he says, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, written words, and that which was upright, even words of truth." (Eccles. 12:10.) (3d.) Consider, what it is to be nourished up in faith and good works. It is to have a sound judgment of the truth, a peaceful conscience through the truth, warm affections to the truth, the heart in love with the truth, and the hope of salvation and glory founded solely on the truth. What is truth? Jesus says, *I am the truth*. (John 14:6.) The truths of the gospel nourish the soul, and cause it to "grow up into Christ in all things, who is the head." (Eph. 4:15.) Prize the words of faith. Diligently attend good doctrine. But evermore remember, all nourishment of souls comes from Christ the head. To him look: upon him live: study to please him in all things. "Of his fulness have we all received." John 1:16.

Christ's words are full of truth and grace,
And nourish up the soul
In love, and peace, and holiness,
And all our lusts control.

Speak, Lord, unto my heart with pow'r,
Make me grow up in thee:
O may I feed on thee each hour,
'Till I thy glory see.

DECEMBER 4.

I, even I am he, who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Isa. 43:25.

With tears of joy and emotions of love, my once dearly beloved and much honoured friend, now with Jesus, the late reverend Mr. Jones, minister of St. Saviour's, told me, the awful charges which precede, and the free and unmerited grace which is proclaimed in this text, made the first impressions of the Saviour's love upon his heart. O that the Lord of all grace may give us some comfort from it to-night! Here grace shines with meridian splendour; here grace gloriously reigns, over all the aboundings of sin: here grace sweetly triumphs over all the baseness and unworthiness of the sinner. In the two former verses, God arraigns the culprit, reads a black catalogue of indictment against him, and concludes with, "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." The sinner is struck dumb. He dare not deny it. The judge proceeds to pass sentence. What is it? Vengeance, hell fire, and damnation? What else could be expected? Be astonished, O heavens! Shout for joy, O sinners, upon earth. *I, even I am he*—what? Who will be avenged of thee? Yes, but it is love which takes vengeance upon thy sins, and will melt down thy hard, thy base heart; *that blotteth out thy transgressions.* What, my soul, the very God whom thou hast made to serve with thy sins, and wearied with thine iniquities, will *he* blot them all out? Yes, as a black cloud is dispelled by the sun, or dispersed by the wind; or as an immense debt is discharged by the stroke of the pen of a merciful creditor, never more to appear

against, or be demanded of the debtor. For, O wonder of love! he saith farther, *and will not remember thy sins*. I cannot forget my sins. How then can my Lord? They are all forgiven and forgotten as thy sins. The Lord remembers he laid them all upon his Son, thy surety. Then they passed from thee to him. Then they were all atoned for by him. Why all this? For the sake of thy works? For any terms and conditions thou hast performed? Spurn the thought. Hear thy Lord: *For mine own sake*, the dear Jesus blotted out thy sins with his blood. The loving Father blots them out for the sake of his *justice and truth*. The gracious Spirit blots them out of the conscience, for the glory of the Father and the Son, and because he is *the comforter* of poor sinners. O what boundless bliss is here! Believe, rejoice, and love.

Here is most joyful gospel news—
Sin's blotted and forgot!
On this sweet word, my soul, now muse,
'Till comfort thou hast got.

Then give thy Lord his glory due;
Rejoice, adore, and love:
Thou art as safe from sin and woe,
As those in heav'n above.

DECEMBER 5.

Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. Isa. 43:26.

The Lord had just laid open the rich love of his gracious heart to poor sinners, in fully blotting out their transgressions and in not remembering their sins. To keep down their pride and exalt the riches of his mercy, he tells them plainly, I do all this, *for my own sake*. But he knows what is in man. He sees the abominable pride of our hearts, and how many would reject his free declaration, and not accept of free-grace mercy, by free-gift of love, without money and without price. Such will have some hand in procuring pardon and justification, by fulfilling terms, and performing conditions. These words may be considered, (1st.) as a reflection upon such persons, and a derision upon their notions. Says the Lord, *Put me in remembrance*. What spiritual act could you do, when dead in trespasses and in sins, in order to obtain life? What good works sprang out of your flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing? Remind me of your power to will and to do what I command, and how you have done all things perfectly well to my glory. *Let us plead together*. Let us come into open court and try this matter. *Declare thou*. Thy own righteousness, for which of all thy good works dost thou challenge my grace, and a right to be justified? Verily, if thou canst face this, as the prophet says, "thou hast a whore's forehead, and refuseth to be ashamed." (Jer. 3:3.) But, (2nd.) we may consider them as spoken to the Lord's people. *Put me in remembrance*—of free declaration, of full pardon. Believe it. Pray the Spirit to apply the sense and comfort of it to thy

conscience. Give me no rest till I have made thee thus happy. Let us plead together. Confess our vileness. Own your wretchedness. Acknowledge your sinfulness. I will plead? my grace reigns over the aboundings of sin, through righteousness unto eternal life. (Rom. 5:21.) *Declare thou that thou mayest be justified.* Plead at thy throne, what I am ever well pleased with, the blood and righteousness of my beloved Son ONLY: and thou shalt be justified from all things; have my peace in thy conscience, which passeth all understanding; be filled with joy and peace in believing, and abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. Now, is not all this amazing love, and these gracious dealings enough to make thee ashamed of thy folly and slowness of heart to believe the truths of a covenant God in Christ?

Grace reigns, and over sin abounds,
And justifies the soul:
While grace our pride and lust confounds,
It makes poor sinners whole.

O for an heart of faith and love,
Rejoicing in the Lord,
To imitate the blest above,
And spread his praise abroad.

DECEMBER 6.

The law worketh wrath. Rom. 4:15.

Our misery, as sinners, is greatly heightened, for want of duly considering the end and design of the holy law, and of the everlasting gospel; and through our blending them together in our consciences. Consider what is meant by the word, working wrath. (1st.) "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4.) (2d.) "The law was added because of transgressions." (Gal. 3:19.) (3d.) "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Therefore, (4th.) "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." (Rom. 3:20.) For, (5th.) "It is a ministration of condemnation." (2 Cor. 3:9.) "Cursed is every one who continueth not in ALL things, which are written in the book of the law to do them," (Gal. 3:10.) Hence is it any marvel, that we, that are transgressors of the law, and cursed by the law, if we examine ourselves by the law, and judge of ourselves according to the law, that it should work in us a sense of wrath, a sense of condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation? Therefore we must see and own, that by nature we are children of wrath, even as others—deserve hell as well as others, and can do no more to save ourselves than others. Now have we thus seen ourselves under the law, and felt the law working wrath in our consciences? If so, this is the certain consequence. "Our mouth is stopped. We are become, (O awful word!) guilty before God." (Rom. 3:19.)

(2d.) How do we expect to get relief to our guilty minds, and ease from wrath in our consciences? For as the law works

wrath, sin works deceitfully in our proud natures. Dear Spirit of truth, leave us not in this momentous point to seek death in the error of our ways: either to palliate our sins—to extenuate the rigour of the law—or to strive by any future obedience to the law to quell its wrath. O blessed comforter! lead us to our law fulfilling Head—shew us, that Jesus hath suffered all the penalties of the law for us—took away all its wrath and curse from us—and obtained everlasting peace with God for us. Here then it is manifest, whether we have received the spirit of truth, or are blinded by the spirit of error. If we attempt to set up any works or doings of our own, to obtain relief from the wrath of the law, sin blinds our eyes and deceives our hearts. If we flee from the wrath of the law, to the grace of Christ, we are enlightened by the Spirit of truth. “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2.)

A sinner curs'd by holy law,
I flee from wrath to come:
Lord, fill my refuge soul with joy,
While here below I roam.

Let conscience find in thee sweet peace,
From all law's threat'ning wrath:
I'll glory in thy righteousness.
Tho' law works sin and death.

DECEMBER 7.

If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. 10:26, 27.

Awful words! enough to make one's heart tremble, excite a holy fear, and provoke a godly jealousy. Wilful sin brings on woful complaints. Yes, says a soul, I find it so by dreadful experience. I have received the knowledge of the truth of salvation by Christ Jesus, and O what have I done! Sinned wilfully, and now I must be punished eternally. There is no hope nor help. My sin is unpardonable. There remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain, fearful looking for of destruction. I am shut up in despair. I wait with terror my dreadful doom. Stop a little. Write not such bitter things against thyself. True, thou art condemned for thy past wicked conduct. It is proper you should take shame to yourself, and repent in dust and ashes. But this text never was intended to drive to despair, even the wilful sinner, who sees and is sorry for his vile conduct. Consider, if every wilful sin is unpardonable, after a person has received the knowledge of the truth, the whole must be condemned for ever: not one sinner would be saved. If so, that word could not be true, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin," (1 John 1:7.) Then backsliding sinners must perish without hope. God himself must prove false to his word; "I will heal their backslidings," (Hosea 14:4.) And Christ must be a false prophet when he declares, "*All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,*" (Matt. 12:31.) Consider well, two

words in this text. (1st.) There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Now this awful sin, is rejecting the one sacrifice of Jesus—treading underfoot the Son of God—accounting his blood an unholy thing, and expecting to be saved some other way. Here is a total apostasy and final unbelief. Whereas your guilty conscience seeks no sacrifice beside the one offering of the Son of God. (2d.) Mind it is the *adversary* who is to be devoured. Is your heart set against Christ? Do you turn from him? Do you desire to have nothing to do with him? O no? I will answer for you, the one desire of your soul is to be pardoned through him, accepted in him, and saved by him. Then you are not an adversary to Christ. You shall not be devoured. This text no more belongs to you, than to angels in heaven. But this does: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1:15.)

Backsliders, who your misery feel,
Attend your Saviour's call;
Return, he'll your backslidings heal;
O crown him Lord of all.

DECEMBER 8.

He who eateth me, even he shall live by me. John 6:57.

Why is the meek Saviour so very wroth against self-righteous people, while he is nothing but love and tenderness to poor sensible sinners? Why does he stamp the highest indignity and contempt on the character of the former, while he receives the publicans and harlots with open arms? Is it not hard, because a man esteems his own righteousness, and values his own perfection, that the Saviour should reject him? Are we not to do good, to be very good, yea, to strive to be as righteous as an angel? Yes, we are to have a better righteousness than angels ever had. But if we think that righteousness is to be obtained by us, to cover our wicked nature, to recommend us to God, and to justify us either first or last, in whole or in part, we deceive ourselves—the truth is not in us—there is the pride of the devil at the bottom of all this. “Woe unto us, we are full, but we shall hunger.” (Luke 6:25.) If full of a proud conceit, and high opinion of our own righteousness, our souls will famish and starve. “The full soul loatheth the honeycomb.” (Prov. 27:7.) It has no appetite to feed upon Christ, and to live by him, as its only food and clothing. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6.) That soul is truly convinced of sin, by the Spirit, who sees he has no righteousness of his own, is sensible, that he must perish everlastingly, without a perfect, spotless righteousness; knows this is only in Christ, and therefore hungers and thirsts after his righteousness. This is the soul who eats Christ—feeds upon him, and shall live by him. A hungry soul is a self-

emptied soul. Is yours such? Does it go out after Christ, as a hungry appetite does after food? Will nothing satisfy you, but the flesh and blood, the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God? Bless the Lord, you have David's experience, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." He fed on Christ, and received his strength from him. "I will make mention of his righteousness, even of his ONLY. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee, and my soul which thou hast redeemed." (Psalm 71:23.) Holy Paul's language is yours: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord. I esteem all things but dung, that I may win Christ. The whole and sole desire of your soul is, to be *found in him*," (Phil. 3:9.) You have the sure word of Christ. You shall live by ME. Live by his grace in time: live with him in glory to all eternity.

'Tis sweet to live and daily feed
On Jesus' flesh and blood:
His flesh and blood are drink indeed,
To all who're by him lov'd.

Lord, may I love thee more and more,
For every word thou saith:
Increase my hunger ev'ry hour,
To feed on thee by faith.

DECEMBER 9.

I will lift up my hands in thy name. Psalm 63:4.

From the little which carnal men see of the conduct of saints, they pronounce them fools and madmen. But were they to follow them to their closets, and be witness to what passes there, between God and their souls, they would deem it the excess of folly, and the height of madness. Two Christian friends were conversing together of the plague of their hearts, and the workings of hypocrisy and evil in their best duties. An unconverted brother of one of them overheard, and upbraided them, saying, I always thought you were two hypocrites, now I have heard it from your own mouths. I have no wandering thoughts at church—I always go with a good heart. Brother, replied the Christian, putting a piece of money in his hand, that is your own, if, when you go to church next, you will watch your heart, and tell me honestly, if you found no wandering thoughts. The poor man faithfully returned the money, and frankly owned, I was scarcely got into the church, before I thought how many looms might be set to work in it. He was a weaver. O what an awful thing it is to be ignorant of one's own heart! And yet the knowledge of its desperate wickedness, and superlative deceitfulness, often dejects and puts disciples to the stand. Here is a blessed remedy at all times, *the loving kindness of the Lord*. This is better than life. This superabounds all the aboundings of sin in us. This enables us to say, joyfully, "I will bless the Lord while I live:" and with boldness, "I will lift up my hands in thy name." In our work and warfare, against all our spiritual enemies, there is a blessed name, which is above every other

name, to animate us with courage, even the name of *Jesus*. However dejected or despised, can we think of, believe in, and look to, that glorious name, person, work, and salvation, with which God is well pleased, without lifting up our hands with comfort and joy? Here I am tonight, a poor sinner, empty of all good, full of all evil. No worth, work, or excellency, to recommend me to God, yet will I lift up my empty hand, to receive a gift from the God of all grace. O that under a sight of my ruined state, and helpless impotency, the Spirit may teach me that heavenly art, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only, O Jesus." (Psal. 71:16.) It is from hence that feeble knees are strengthened, hands which hang down are lifted up, and fearful hearts made strong. Consider Christ Jesus. Heb. 3:1.

What name so sweet to sinners' ears,
As that of Christ, our king?
'Tis this repels our doubts and fears,
And joy of soul doth bring.

My hands to thee I will lift up,
A blessing to receive,
From thee my Christ, my only hope;
In whom I will believe.

DECEMBER 10.

Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Rom. 8:15.

The Spirit of God never was, never is, nor ever can be the Spirit of bondage to any soul. Some have asserted it, but it is a mistake. It is contrary to his name, *the Comforter*. He is a free Spirit, a Spirit of liberty to the soul. It is inconsistent with his office, he takes of the things of Christ, and shews them to us—testifies of Christ—brings us into the liberty of Christ—enables us to glory in the adoption of children, and to call God Father, in the faith of Christ. When he convinces of sin, it is not to bring the soul into bondage, but to break the bondage of sin, of the law, of death, and of Satan, in the conscience, and to cast away the cords thereof, that the soul may be united to Christ by faith. In all this, he is *the Comforter*. What then is this Spirit of bondage? It is the Spirit of the law. Just as the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, (Exod. 1:14,) so does the law of all those who are under it. Do what they would, they could never please, never get a good word from their task-masters. So let the poor legal sinner, labour, tug, and toil, from day to day, to fulfil the law, and be made righteous by obedience to it, yet like hard hearted Pharaoh, it says, “ye are idle, ye are idle;” pay me what thou owest me, my full due. I am not satisfied. You have not fulfilled my righteous demands. You are still cursed. Thus a legal spirit is always in bondage. His soul is always subject *to fear*. Though he works like a slave, yet he gets nothing but slavish dread of

God, and fear of being damned at last. For the law works nothing but wrath in the conscience. (Rom. 4:15.) This is fearful bondage indeed. Glory to the Spirit of adoption, for bringing us out of it, and enabling us to cry, Abba, Father. How does he effect this? We receive the Spirit of adoption by the faith of Jesus. We see a righteous law, perfectly fulfilled by the one obedience of Christ's life. By this, we sinners are made righteous. (Rom. 5:19.) Here our hearts take refuge. Through this righteousness the Spirit brings peace to our consciences: discharges from the condemnation of the law: frees us from guilty fears and terrors of God, and instead thereof, breathes this precious cry in our hearts, Abba, my loving, my adopted Father in Christ. Now love takes place in the soul. Once a child of God, and for ever so. The Spirit of adoption never becomes a Spirit of bondage again. But if you do not walk in faith and love, he may leave you to the awful bondage of your own spirit, and under the terrors of a broken law. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Ephes. 4:30.

"If I've the honour, Lord, to be
One of thy numerous family,
On me the gracious gift bestow
To call thee Abba, Father, too."

DECEMBER 11.

And the LORD spoke unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Exod. 33:11.

In the opinion of infidels, Moses is as vile a hypocrite, and as great an enthusiast as ever existed. You see your calling, brethren. What shall be done unto the men, whom the King of saints delighteth to honour? Treat them as the filth and offscouring of all things, say the world. Thank you, ye sons of folly. You give us an evident token of our salvation, and that of God. (Phil. 1:28.) If Moses is not to be credited, Christ is to be rejected. He puts his cause upon the testimony of Moses. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." (John 5:46.) He was a friend of the bridegroom. He was admitted to close and intimate converse with him, before he appeared in flesh. Our Saviour saith to all his disciples, "ye are my friends," (John 15:14.) He admits them into sweet fellowship, and free communion with himself. A precious minister of Christ, late on earth, now in glory, says in his diary, "I walked in the fields, and conversed much with our Saviour, about the wickedness of my heart," etc. St. Paul says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:" freedom from the vail of nature's blindness and ignorance. Liberty, to draw nigh to God, and to pour out our hearts before him. For, we as all true believers in Christ, "behold as in a glass," the clear glass of the gospel, "the glory of the Lord," in the face of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth to poor sinners. That is God's greatest glory. That is our highest mercy. This unspeakable privilege, believers in common are admitted to. This constitutes our heaven below. It creates

heaven in the soul. It brings God and the soul near: yea, face to face. God's face is towards us in Christ. Our face is towards him by the faith of Christ. His countenance smiles upon us. That makes us of a joyful heart. "My sheep hear my voice," says Christ, (John 10:27.) Yes, saith the soul, "it is the voice of my beloved." (Song 5:2.) See then your calling, O believer, and thou, my soul. Live not below your exalted privilege. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Speak humbly to God, of your sin, misery, and wretchedness. He will speak graciously to you, of his love and salvation in his Son. "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness"—"Am mighty to save." (Isa. 45:19, and 63:1.) O the blessedness of thus beholding the face of the Lord! We are changed into the same image, by the Lord the Spirit. For God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 4:6.

"Shine, mighty God, with vigour shine,
On this benighted heart of mine;
And let thy glories stand reveal'd,
As in the Saviour's face beheld."

DECEMBER 12.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Isa. 49:15.

Lord, remember David and all his afflictions. (Psal. 132:1.) How comprehensive is this short petition? What a holy boldness, what a filial confidence breathes in it! Yes, says a poor doubting dejected soul, but it came from an eminent saint, but I am a miserable sinner: I am afraid the Lord hath forgotten and forsaken me. Is your mind pained at the thoughts of this? That is a godly sorrow, which the wicked are strangers to. This is one of the afflictions of the righteous. Lord, remember me, is the prayer of faith, to a covenant God. Here is a precious cordial, a heart reviving answer from the Lord. Look at that woman with her smiling babe at her breast. See how fond she is of it, how delighted with it. It is part of herself. She bore it with pains, and brought it into the world with labour. Its innocent looks, and helpless cry, call for her tenderest affection and regard. Can she forget it? Can she refuse to shew compassion to it? Will she neglect to administer to its wants, and to preserve from danger the dear and tender son of her womb? Is it possible? Here is an image in nature, which strikes us with the most tender affection, in order to set forth the love and care of the Lord to his people. But strong and striking as it is, there have been, there may be such monsters in nature, who have not had compassion upon the offspring of their womb. Therefore, knowing the fears and surmises of our nature, the Father of love, and the Friend of sinners, as it were, corrects himself; and says, "yea, they may

forget"—the comparison fails—this image, yea, all nature is too weak to borrow a representation from. *Yet will I not forget thee.* O may faith take hold, fasten, and live upon this precious word. O may love be excited, and joy increased by it. As though our dear Lord had said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," saved thee with an everlasting salvation, called thee by my grace, made thee know thy poverty and vileness, thy hopeless and helpless state: shall I ever be unmindful of thy distress, deaf to thy cry, and unwilling to relieve thy wants? Impossible! Is the tender infant part of its mother? Remember, "we are members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5:30.) In pain and sorrow did the mother bring the infant forth? O what agonies did it cost our Lord to redeem us! Has he been at the pains, to bring us to himself for salvation? After all this, will he leave us to perish by sin, to be overcome by the world, or to be a prey to Satan? If we think so, we must sadly forget him who says, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," Isa. 49:16.

My name from the palms of his hand,
Eternity will not erase—
Impress'd on his heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace."

DECEMBER 13.

Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against GOD?
Rom. 9:20.

The sovereignty of God, in dispensing his grace to whom he pleaseth, and which he oweth to none, ever has been a subject of contention. Unawakened people, with self-righteous hearts, and stubborn free-will pride, rise with indignation of spirit, daringly call in question the ways of God to man, and impiously reply against God, as though he had not an absolute right to do what he will with his own, and confer his favours when, and on whom he pleases. "Ye shall be as gods," says the father of lies, (Gen. 3:5.) Our first parents believed him. They have tainted our whole race with this proud lie. Hence the poet most sarcastically says, to repliers against God,

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God.

St. Paul meets such. He puts a question to them. He demands an answer from them. Who art thou? The Lord in the sovereignty of grace, and with the glory of his majesty, issues his royal proclamation from heaven. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Now who? what art thou who darest to reply? What! Reply against God? What! thou, O man—worm of the earth—a creature of a day—born like a wild ass's colt, without understanding—by nature a child of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins, blind to thy own existence—thou vain

fool, thou child of pride, and son of folly, dost *thou* exalt thy ignorance, and display thy enmity by opening thy mouth against God, his truths and his ways? This is one of the severest reproofs of the Holy Spirit, in the whole Bible. Improve it. Remember there is "a woe to him who striveth with his Maker," (Isa. 45:9.) Know, you have nothing you can properly call your own, but sin. That is the parent of ignorance and pride. Wilt thou exalt these against the wisdom and grace of God? Shall our corrupt reason reply against God, call him to an account for his ways, and say unto him, what doest thou? Consider, have we not forfeited all right to God's favour? Does any good thing dwell in our nature, to entitle us to his mercy? O fall down, and thank God for the merciful gift of his son Jesus. Adore the riches of his abundant mercy, that "at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace: and if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace," etc. Rom. 11:5, 6.

While others wrangle and reply,
Against thy sov'reign ways, O Lord:
O bring my spirit down from high.
To feed by faith upon thy word!

Dear Spirit, teach my soul the truth,
As it's in Christ my Lord reveal'd;
O thou my God, guide of my youth,
My heart from ev'ry error shield.

DECEMBER 14.

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD? Gen. 39:9.

Look now at young Joseph, and say, is not this the noblest reasoning against a fierce temptation? Here is a youth in the bloom of life, in the vigour of nature, passions ran high, affections strong, a violent temptation presents, a fair seducer solicits. Yet, amidst all this, with the coolness of age, with the grace of faith he reasons, and with a holy fortitude of soul he withstands and overcomes the sin. Here is a blessed lesson for you, ye youth! nor less instructive to me, and to you, ye aged! Every period of life has its peculiar temptations. Ye children of special grace, ye contenders for its glorious doctrines, consider, (1st.) what is implied in this, *sin against God?* Would not Joseph have sinned against the best of masters: against the wife of his master: against his own soul? Doubtless: but his God is above and beyond all other objects. The love of his gracious God was in his heart; the fear of his covenant God was before his eyes; the glory of the God of his salvation was near and dear to his soul. O believer! remember when tempted to commit sin, it is a great wickedness against the everlasting love of God your Father; the dying love of God your Redeemer; the reviving love of God your Comforter. Though sin cannot sink your soul into a hell of endless torment, yet it will surely bring a hell of misery into your conscience. Remember, it is against God. Look to him. Flee from sin. With every temptation, God will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. God is faithful. "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." (1 Cor.

10:13.) Consider, (2d.) the force of his reasoning. How can I sin against God? Lay a peculiar emphasis upon *God* and *I*. Here it is not criminal, not arrogant, to introduce that little letter of great sound, *I*. What a peculiar spirit of the fire of generous love and holy energy is there in this question, how can *I* sin! Is it possible that *I*, hell-deserving, yet heaven-beloved *I*, can wilfully and deliberately sin? *I* sin against *my God!* Can *I* set at nought his love, *I* wilfully violate his law, *I* deliberately defy his power? Impossible! His grace teaches me to deny all ungodliness. The love of Christ constrains from it. If lusts prevail, the sense of love is lost. O, let love abound over lust! Jesus, save me. This is the reasoning, this the prayer of genuine faith and generous love. "Sin shall not have the dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.) "The grace of God teaches us." Titus 2:12.

What man on earth can sin withstand,
When suited to his lust,
Unless upheld by God's right hand?
For he himself is dust.

Lord, then thy saving grace impart,
When sin invades my soul:
Let love be strong within my heart,
And faith my lusts control.

DECEMBER 15.

Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of GOD. Mark 4:11.

When the Son of God came from heaven to earth, then was the mystery of eternity revealed and the kingdom of God made manifest to the sons of men. What, to all of them? No: many, when Christ was on earth, and ever since, have neither eyes to see, ears to hear, nor hearts to understand the mystery of the kingdom of God. The God of this world blinds their eyes, stops their ears, and shuts their hearts against spiritual mysteries. And they are honest enough to proclaim it with their tongues, saying, Where mysteries begin, there religion ends. Lord, why am not I left in natural blindness, ignorance, and stupidity of soul! O why me, Lord, and not others! (1st.) The mystery of the kingdom of God is that revealed truth, whereby the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, will get everlasting honour and glory to all the attributes and perfections of the godhead, through the incarnate *Jesus*: in the salvation of miserable sinners, in setting up the kingdom of God in their hearts, upon the ruin of sin, and by the destruction of Satan. "This is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. 3:16.) This mystery, "angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1:12.) O my soul, O my fellow-sinners, we are much more concerned in it than they. Let us pry into it daily, with the greatest earnestness and the deepest attention. (2d.) What is it to know this mystery? It is spiritually, savingly and experimentally to see it—understand the grace and mercy of it—to believe its suitableness to us—our want of it—the hope,

peace, and joy, which are brought to our souls by it—so as heartily to approve of God’s bringing an atonement for our sins, righteousness for our justification, and salvation to our souls, by his beloved Son, the MAN Christ Jesus. (3d.) How do we know this? By the revelation of the word, and the inspiration of the Spirit. It is given us to know it. The Spirit opens our eyes to see it, and our hearts to understand and believe it, as revealed in his word. (4th.) Who? Even ALL whom the Lord shall call. In the days of his flesh, Jesus called unto him whom he would, (Mark 3:13.) So in the days of the Spirit’s power, he enlightens whom he will to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. (5th.) We know the sweet “fellowship of this mystery:” (Eph. 3:9.) Our hearts are in love with the doctrines of grace, and our affections swayed by them, for we understand them, and our judgments approve of them. Thus we have joyful fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in the truth, through the grace of the Spirit. The more we know of this mystery, the more comfort. Study the love of Christ, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Eph. 3:19.

“Just like his nature is his grace,
All sovereign and all free:
Great God, how searchless are thy ways!
How deep thy judgments be!”

DECEMBER 16.

What profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? Mal 3:14.

These words were spoken to the carnal Jews. They may be applied to us. For the filthy leaven of the proud Pharisee, works in all our natures. At least, I know one who finds it does. What does it produce? Hard thoughts of God, and stout words against him. We are apt to censure his good conduct towards others, and think he deals rather hardly with us. (1st.) "We call the proud happy." In a dark, tried, tempted, deserted hour, when we see the poor, proud sons of pride and folly, ranting and reveling in all the gay scenes of mirth and jollity, we are apt to look at them, think of them, and draw such conclusions from them as these—Well, surely these people are happier in their ways, than I am in mine. They are strangers to my heart burdens and soul distresses. Mirth sits on their countenance, while grief and sorrow weigh me down. This was the experience of David, Job, Asaph, and the prophets. We frequently find them at times, sorely distressed on account of this. The chief of sinners, and the least of all saints, who now writes, has also been often tried and tempted in this matter. (2d.) We say, "They who work wickedness are set up." It staggers our reason, to see open notorious and ungodly flourish in great esteem and abundance: while I think, if I am a child of God, I am despised, and can but just get the necessaries of life, and those with hard labour, and much care. (3d.) "Those who tempt God, are even delivered." If they get into troubles and perplexities, though they daringly provoke God to his face, yet

they find friends enough to deliver them, while I combat my troubles daily and no man cares for my soul. And therefore, (4th.) The words of the text are taken up. "What profit is it," etc. O my soul! Lie low before the Lord. Be ashamed of thy base, carnal reasonings against, and unbelieving thoughts of thy God. What profit? Pride avaunt. Look not to thy keeping his ordinances, and walking mournfully in deep humiliation before the Lord. Yet do both constantly. But look to a covenant God in Christ—look at the precious free-grace promises, which are in him: look to the Comforter, to receive freely out of the fulness of Jesus, love and salvation. Look not at others with an eye of envy, but look at thyself, with an eye of astonishment, and adore the distinguishing love of the Lord. What if thou hast not expected comforts in the way—what if thou walkest mournfully all the way: yet thou art blessed, and hast blessed promises to support thee. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matt. 5:4.) Mind that precious word. They who sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Psalm 126:5, 6.

O that I had a stronger faith,
To look within the veil:
To credit what my Saviour saith,
Whose words can never fail.

DECEMBER 17.

My beloved is mine. Song 2:16.

Here is a knowledge worth more than heaven and earth. For heaven and earth shall pass away, but this knowledge endureth for ever. O happy souls who are favoured with it, give fresh glory to your beloved to-night. Ye who are seeking it, rejoice. For he hath said, "every one who seeketh findeth." (Matt. 7:8.) Happy Job was favoured with it, when he was in heaviness through manifold temptations—broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. Then he must have utterly fainted, had he not believed. Time was, when Job could say, *my health, my wealth, my honours, my children, my comforts*, but a period came when all these were taken from him. He had nothing within nor without to stay his soul upon, but the word of the Lord, and the Lord revealed in the word. This was his support and his glory. Though I have lost all things, I have *my Redeemer* still. He lives. I know it. While he lives, I cannot die. As he has redeemed me, I cannot perish. While I know it, I cannot despair. I will rejoice in him, though I am stript of all things besides him. O how does the whole world lie fast asleep, in the arms of the wicked one, without the least thought of, or desire after the knowledge of this precious Redeemer! But how many poor sinners are saying, O that I knew this dear Redeemer was mine. O that I could say, "I know *my Redeemer* liveth." Nothing in all the world could give me such comfort as this. Bless the dear Spirit, for he hath given you peculiar knowledge of Christ, and special approbation of him. It is a special grace, to see your misery as a sinner, and your want of a Redeemer, and to

make Christ the choice of your soul. You know, you believe the Redeemer liveth. Why, all this is in consequence of his love to you. He chose you. He died for you. He lives to pray for you. Therefore he has blessed you, by sending his Spirit to you. Why then should unbelief so prevail in you, as to keep you from honouring him, by claiming him as your beloved, and rejoicing in him as your friend? O the unspeakable mercy to have such a Redeemer! We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: perfect peace with God, and a sure title to glory. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. O study the work, the perfectly finished, and everlasting glorious work of Christ's redemption. Believe his precious word of invitation, Come unto me. His precious promise is, I will give you rest. What could Christ have done more than he hath to manifest his love to sinners? Why then should you or I, or any poor sinner be kept from claiming him by faith, saying, this is *my* beloved and *my* friend? Song 5:16.

“Your harps, ye trembling saints,
Down from the willows take;
Lord, to the praise of love divine
Bid every string awake.

DECEMBER 18.

Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? Matt. 6:31.

The word of the Lord is like a drawn picture, which, whoever looks at, thinks the eyes are towards him, and fixed on him. There is in Christ's word, somewhat that suits our state, under every circumstance, and in all times and seasons. Pliny speaks of a rod of myrtle, which if a traveller carries in his hand, he never grows faint nor weary. Verily, Christ's word is like this rod of myrtle. For it beguiles our weary steps—smoothes our rugged paths—braces our weak nerves—animates our weary minds—resolves our unreasonable doubts—forbids every anxious thought, and provides for every tormenting care. Christ would have our hearts simple in faith, and our hope steadily fixed on him; so as not to be agitated with anxious cares about a dying body, and a perishing world. To suppress these, let it suffice, that our heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Therefore be not of doubtful mind, as though ye were orphans, who have no father to love you, or provide for you. He directs our thoughts to his kingdom, as our first and chief concern, and assures us all temporal things shall be added: or, as it were, thrown into the scale. If not for the body, so neither for the soul, should we be of doubtful minds. Our Father hath made ample provision for that also. (1st.) "What shall we eat?" The most precious, heavenly, soul-nourishing food is yet before us in the gospel: *The flesh of Christ*, which is meat indeed. "The WORD was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us," (John 1:14.) on purpose that we might feed on him; and live by him. Says he, "He who eateth

me, even he shall live by me." (John 6:57.) Believing on Christ, is feeding on him. Hath your heart fed on Christ to-day by faith? (2nd.) "What shall we drink?" The blood of Christ: his blood is drink indeed. Says he, "whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." O without this mutual indwelling, if we have the most spacious dwelling, we are under wrath and curse. But if Christ be in us, and we in him, we dwell in God, in heaven, in glory, by faith. Thank the precious, sin-atonement blood of Christ by faith to-night, and be thankful. (3d.) "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Poor naked sinner, the robe of righteousness, the garment of salvation, wrought out by thy elder Brother, is put upon thee by thy heavenly Father. It is not only unto ALL, but upon *all* who believe. (Rom. 3:22.) Remember the myrtle. Carry Christ's word in the hand of faith, "lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Heb. 12:3.

Our heavenly Father will provide
What's needful and is best:
Then turn your anxious thoughts to pray'rs,
In Jesus ever rest.

DECEMBER 19.

Said JESUS unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself. Matt. 16:24.

We are called to follow Christ in the *regeneration*, (Matt. 19:28.) That is, in the new state of things, called, "the time of reformation," (Heb. 9:10.) wherein he has set all things right between God and us sinners. Christ has not left us any thing to do, whereby to satisfy divine justice, and to fulfil the holy law, in order to procure God's favour, and a title to his kingdom: but only to come after him, to reap all the glorious spoils and victories of the law-fulfilling life, and sin-atonement death, in our perfect reconciliation to God, justification before him, acceptance and peace with him. O soul, this knowledge is essential to thy following Christ, in faith and love. Without this you cannot come after him one step. Therefore in love he bids thee deny thyself. As though he had said, all things in the old creation of fallen nature are contrary to my spiritual kingdom, and oppose my reign in the heart; therefore, all in self must be denied. Receive this in faith, as the command of love, to enjoy peace and comfort in thy Lord. (1st.) Thy carnal reason exalts itself against the grace and truth of thy Lord. Deny this. (2d.) Thy self-righteous pride of obtaining righteousness by works, opposes free and full justification unto life, by the spotless righteousness of Christ. Renounce that. (3d.) The selfish notion of fulfilling terms and conditions of salvation is contrary to following Christ, as having finished our salvation. Disown that. (4th.) Corrupt lusts will draw away thy heart from following Christ, in the paths of holiness. Deny them. (5th.) The pleasures of carnal sense, attract the heart

from Christ. Renounce them. (6th.) Unbelief is an enemy to thy Lord's love and truth. Resist it. Oppose thy Lord's word to it. (7th.) Doubts and fears that Christ will not receive thee—will reject thee—that he will not save thee to the uttermost—that thou mayest perish at last, will prevent thy comfortably following Christ. Reject them. Oppose his loving promise to them. Lastly, deny, renounce and disown the notion, that thou hast any power of thy own, to deny thyself in following Christ, and to persevere to the end. Let this be ever your prayer, "Draw me, I will run after thee." (Song 1:4.) Christ's power of drawing is our strength for denying and running. Therefore when Christ says, *deny thyself*, look not on him as a rigorous law-giver, to enslave thee under bondage: but as a precious law-fulfiller, a loving Saviour, and as exalted to bestow grace on miserable sinners. He would have us live totally out of corrupt nature and carnal self, be quite happy in him; and comfortable in following of him. For he saith, "I who speak in righteousness, am mighty to save." (Isa. 63:1.) Profession is easy to hypocrites. Self-denial is the evidence of real disciples.

At Christ's command we must take up
Our cross without delay—
Our lives—and thousand lives of ours,
His love can ne'er repay.

DECEMBER 20.

Underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27.

It is related of Anteus, that every time Hercules threw him to the ground, he rose up the stronger, for he received new strength, by touching his mother, the earth. This is true of the Christian. The more he is assaulted, and thrown down by the enemy, the more he falls into the Lord's everlasting arms, and gets fresh strength. He cannot be thrown down lower than God permits: for "underneath are the everlasting arms." His word is full of grace—his arms almighty—his love everlasting. Here is the wisdom, here the glory of the Lord's people, to look for themselves, to go out of themselves, for safety and salvation. For they rest upon God's word. They believe the Lord to be all that to them, which he has said. This is living by faith—honouring the Lord's truth—glorifying the Saviour's name. Why are we told? "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Because we know and see ourselves deserving of hell, and liable to fall into the pit of destruction. Therefore the Lord would have our hearts strong in him, and in the power of his might, that we might not fear the face of any enemy, nor be dismayed under the sense of our own vileness, and insufficiency to stand. The spouse of Christ, thus sweetly expresses her comfort and safety. "His left hand is under my head: his right hand doth embrace me," (Cant. 2:6.) Signifying, that she was encircled in the arms of her loving Saviour. Both hands were engaged for her safety and support. O drooping believer! Why dost thou hang down thy head? Why those dejecting doubts, and distressing fears? Look back to the everlasting covenant. There almighty love presided.

Then wast thou viewed, and thy case provided for. Look up, there sits a God of love on a throne of grace. There stands the blessed advocate, Jesus, ever pleading thy cause. Look underneath, there are the everlasting arms to sustain, and support thee. What power then shall prevail against thee? Neither sin, death, or hell, can snatch thee out of the everlasting arms of thy almighty God, thy reconciled Father: out of the loving arms of thy gracious Redeemer: out of the powerful arms of the Holy Ghost, thy Sanctifier. Everlasting safety is in everlasting arms. Here is a covenant declaration. Exercise the covenant grace of faith upon this text. (1st.) "The eternal God is thy refuge." Flee to him in distress. (2d.) His everlasting arms are underneath. Rejoice in thy safety. (3d.) He will thrust out every enemy before thee, and speak destruction to them. Happy art thou, O believer! Who is like unto thee, saved by thy Lord!

O Lord, I bless thee for thy word,
To build my faith upon;
Which doth such daily strength afford,
My heavily race to run.

DECEMBER 21.

Keep thy heart with all diligence. Prov. 4:23.

Camden reports, that "Redwald, king of the east Saxons, the first prince of this nation who was baptized; yet, in the same church, allowed an altar for Christ, and another for the heathen idols." How many professors imitate him! Their hearts are not whole with Christ. They are sons of folly. This a charge of wisdom to all her children. Consider, there is but one object can make your heart happy. There are a thousand that promise happiness, but only give misery. Keep thy heart in [the sense of] the love of God. (Jude 1:21.) Give all diligence to this blessed end. Unless you do, vanity may prevail in the mind, error in the understanding, perverseness in the will, the affections may be inordinately set upon other objects, than thy Lord; and so thy conscience will contract fresh guilt. Then thou mayest be left to bemoan a hard heart, and an absent God: darkness may surround thee; fears and terrors haunt thee; the ghost of long departed sins may arise and distress thee; the prospect of death and eternity appear horrible to thee: the day of judgment most dreadful, while Satan will triumph over thee, with "There, there! so would I have it." Then may thy heart upbraid thee, with, All this is come upon thee, because thou wast not diligent, to watch its motions, to keep out the enemy, and to keep up sweet, communion and holy fellowship with thy best Friend, thy loving Saviour. O! say not with some, (who have more of the notion of Christianity in the head, than the experience of it in the heart) Why all this legal stuff about keeping the heart? Hath not the Lord said, "I will keep it night and day, lest any

hurt it?" (Isa. 27:3.) Yes, blessed be his name, he has. Would you therefore abuse his love? Behold, I show you a mystery. But it is the mystery of iniquity, which works in such, causing them to oppose the declaration and promises of the Lord, to his commands and exhortations. The former are taken up as a plea, for such corrupt notions. Because you depend on the Lord's providence for preservation, would you be careless of the doors of your house, and not use diligence and care to keep out thieves? Lord, stir up my soul to give all diligence. Though, not for our diligence, we shall be saved; yet, in a way of diligence, we shall escape many snares and evils, and enjoy safety and comfort. "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. 13:4.) Such shall feed upon heavenly truth, grace, and love. Their souls shall prosper, and be in good health; whilst careless triflers with God and their own souls, shall go to rest with dejection, rise with distress, and live in awful suspense.

No peace of soul, no joy of heart,
Unless we watchful are
To walk in truth, from sin depart,
And shun each treach'rous snare.

Then, O my soul, would'st thou enjoy
The smile of thy dear Christ?
Whatever would thy peace destroy,
Be careful to resist.

DECEMBER 22.

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.
Isa. 35:4.

Mind the title to this chapter—"The flourishing of Christ's kingdom." What! and yet fearful hearts in it! What sort of disciples are these? There ever were such in the church. We meet with them daily. Where is the heart which at times is not fearful? That does not stand in need of being strengthened by the word and the grace of God? O! says one, I am of a fearful heart. I read my doom. It is to have my part with the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, etc. in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21:8.) Yes: this will be the certain portion of all, who are so fearful of their good names and fair characters, as to be ashamed of Christ and his gospel, and give them up for the love and friendship of this world. Be not of such fearful hearts, here spoken of. (1st.) This sort are rather of "a hasty heart." It discovers its state by its beating, as the pulse does the disorders of the body. It beats quick; it trembles; it fears the face of its enemies; it dreads destruction from them. (2d.) Such a hasty heart is precipitate and inconsiderate. Because it does not know so clearly, nor enjoy so comfortably the grace of Christ as others do, it is hasty in writing bitter things against itself, and drawing black conclusions of its state. Such an one says, "I am fearful I am not one of the elect—not a believer in Christ—am not sanctified by his Spirit—shall at last turn out a hypocrite, and bring a scandal upon Christ and his gospel." Such fears are of a godly nature. They spring from holy jealousy. Such are Christ's tender lambs and timorous sheep.

Therefore, he commands his ministers to say to such, "Be strong." Though your strength is perfect weakness, and your enemies powerful and innumerable, yet—what? Be strong in confidence, in the Lord's word of grace and truth; in the belief of his promises. "Fear not." Banish your fears. Hear your Lord. Look to him. "Behold your God:" the God of fearful hearts and trembling spirits. Your God in flesh "will come with vengeance" against all your enemies, even God, "with a recompence." His reward is with him. Nothing but love is in his heart: his lips speak nothing but grace and truth to fearful hearts and trembling souls. "He will come and save you." Believe this: bless him for this: trust him for this: rejoice in him for this: wait upon him for this. Be assured of this, "The Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they who wait upon him." Isa. 30:18.

Tho' fearful in my heart,
My Lord proclaims his grace;
He sweetly bids my fears depart,
And shews his loving face.

Be strong in faith, my soul:
Honour thy faithful Lord,
Who can thy fiercest foes control,
According to his word.

DECEMBER 23.

All my springs are in thee. Psa. 87:7.

Philosophers, ignorant of the true God, who doth all things by his power, talk of an occult quality in nature; a certain something, which they can neither explain nor account for, but which doth wonders. Just as darkly do many speak of a light within, which, if they are obedient to, and do not resist, will guide and sanctify them. But they manifest that it is not a divine light; for it teaches them to slight and reject divine revelation. This is Deism. But the heavenly-taught soul speaks as the oracles of God. He confesses, Christ dwells in his heart by faith; and says, O Jesus, "All my springs are in thee." Thou art that spring, which put and keeps my soul in spiritual motion. We see the vibration of the balance of a watch: we know its motion is from the main spring, and the union it has with it. Stop, say the sons of pride; compare not man to a machine. Truly, he is worse than a good machine, in good order. Verily, he is naturally like a bad machine, out of order. For Satan has dominion over him, rules in him, and works upon him, according to his power. (Eph. 2:2.) O, omnipotent Lord, it is by thy heavenly skill our souls "are created, in Christ Jesus, unto good works. We are thy workmanship," (chap. 2:10.) (1st.) Hence springs the good work of humility in the soul. I have no spring in myself, in my own free-will; no inherent righteousness, power, wisdom or goodness. I can draw no waters of consolation to refresh my soul, from any thing I am in myself, or can do for myself. I could as soon find a spring of water in a hot, dry, sandy desert, as in myself. Hence with David, "I am in a dry and thirsty land,

where no water is." (Psalm 63:1.) But, (2d.) here is the joyful claim of faith, "*All my springs are in thee.*" O Jesus! when I find my soul dry, and parched with burning lusts—fiery darts from Satan—scorching temptations from the world: the springs of thy love, the streams of thy grace, the fountain of thy blood, my Lord and my God, cool, refresh, and comfort my soul. Dear Lord, thou hast cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink." (John 7:37.) O free and precious invitation! I thank thee, dear Lord, for it, and for the thirsting my soul has towards thee. Glory to thee, I do believe on thee. Thou hast said, I shall never thirst after any other, but thee, for salvation. (John 6:35.) "For it pleased the Father, that in thee all fulness should dwell." (Col. 1:19.) I acquiesce in it: I rejoice at it. "O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me: thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Isa. 12:1.

Thou of life the fountain art—
Freely let me take of thee
Spring thou up within my heart—
Rise to all eternity.

DECEMBER 24.

Lo, this is the man that made not GOD his strength. Psalm 52:7.

The following fact I had from my late beloved friend, and faithful minister of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Jones. A poor infidel deist had conceived a strange notion, that men need not die unless they would. Upon his deathbed, he affected to be resolute, and bid God defiance. In his last moments, he sprang up, gnashed with his teeth, and with looks of horror cried out, "God! I will not die!" With these words he expired. O the fearful death of the ungodly, who make not God their strength! They have hope in their death. For they make God their strength in their life. What can a vile sinner do to make God his friend? Where is the impotent sinner, who can make God his strength? What meaneth this? Why, God is that to every poor sinner, which the word reveals him, and faith takes him to be. Consider this. You say, I am a weak needy creature. What saith the Lord? "Let him take hold of my strength." (Isa. 27:5.) "Thou hast been a strength to the poor; a strength to the needy in his distress." (chap. 25:4.) Again, in that sweet 52d. chapter, the title of which runs thus: *Christ persuadeth the church to believe his free redemption*—The Lord calls upon poor and needy sinners, "Awake, awake! put on thy strength." (verse 1.) Now hence, for the encouragement of our hearts, and to the joy of our souls, we see that the Lord is the strength of that soul, who believes in him, chooses him, takes and receives him as such. Faith is the hand that takes hold of God's strength: faith claims God, as the strength of the poor and needy. And because our hearts

are apt to grow heavy and sleepy, neglect and forget him, who is our strength and our portion; lo! he crieth to us with a mighty voice, "*Awake, awake!*" Lift up your eyes: look unto me, who, "when ye were without strength, in due time died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6.) *Put on thy strength.* Thou hast no inherent strength. Know, thy strength is perfect weakness. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength." (Isa. 26:4.) Learn daily that blessed art, to say with St. Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:10.) The Lord commands you, "Let the weak say, I am strong." (Joel 3:10.) "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. 6:10.

Our Saviour living here on earth,
In flesh like to our own:
To faith and joy and peace gives birth,
And brought salvation down.

Hold fast this truth in faith, my soul,
Thro' all thy trials here;
This will thy hurtful lusts control,
And banish all thy fear.

DECEMBER 25.

Emmanuel, GOD with us. Matt. 1:23.

This is the mystery which holy angels pry into, infernal devils envy, proud infidels reject with derision, humble sinners glory in, and which all the redeemed around the throne above are incessantly shouting, and everlastingly triumphing in.

“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find:
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.”

This is the language of every sin-convinced, spiritually-enlightened soul. O how did we talk of God in nature's darkness, when we were without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world, even Atheists! But now, O wonder of converting grace! we see, we believe, we know *God with us*. This is the chief glory of our faith, the chief joy of our hearts. (1st.) *God with us*, in the eternal council and covenant before time. There he had our persons in view, our case at heart, and undertook to be our surety, our Jesus. Lo, we were then given to him by the Father; that, (2d.) in the fulness of time, he might be *God with us*, in our flesh. Lo, he is born. See the babe. Adore the God. Rejoice in “Emmanuel, God with us;” that, (3d.) he might accomplish that in our nature, without which we must have been eternally lost; but for which we are everlastingly saved: namely, finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness—suffer, the just for the unjust, to bring us to

God, (1 Peter 3:18.) This is sweet in the history; but, O how much more so, in the experience of the mystery. (4th.) *God with us*, living in our hearts, hopes, and affections by the Spirit, through faith. We know, we taste, we feel the reality, power, and comfort of this truth, *God in Christ* reconciled, not imputing our trespasses to us. (2 Cor. 5:19.) Therefore, (5th.) *God with us*, to oppose all who are against us. Well might St. Paul ask, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31.) Now, may we not stand forth, and challenge all the powers of sin, earth, and hell, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" For God the justifier, and we the justified, are one in Christ: "I in them, and thou in me," says the Lord. (John 17:23.) Hence we meet in love, mutually embrace, and have fellowship one with another. This is the glory of Christ's nativity, brought into our hearts. "Christ in us the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27.) This makes a joyful soul, and a happy Christmas.

Thou God, who came in mortal flesh,
The lost to seek and save:
In spirit visit us afresh—
New triumphs let us have.

DECEMBER 26.

To reveal his Son in me. Gal. 1:16.

From hence begins spiritual life: a life from God, in God, with God, and to God. By the gospel the Son of God is revealed *to* us. By the Spirit, he is revealed *in* us. External revelation by the word, and internal by the Spirit, are both necessary to salvation. Though St. Paul was separated from his mother's womb, to be called by the grace of God, yet he had not this inward revelation of Jesus Christ to his heart, till he heard the external word of Christ with his ear, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4.) Hence learn to prize, both the outward testimony of the word and the inward testimony of the Spirit. Consider, (1st.) to reveal, signifies to discover, or make clear to a person, what he did not know before. So, (Phil. 3:15.) "If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you." So the gospel is a revelation of Jesus Christ, without which we could never have known, nor understood, that our sins are atoned by the blood, our persons justified by the righteousness, and our souls everlastingly redeemed and saved by the work of Christ. Is this knowledge, by this revelation, all that is necessary to salvation? No. Persons may attain a notion of these things in the head, and understand somewhat of them, and yet the heart be without precious faith in, and peculiar approbation of Christ, destitute of the love of Christ, and of any saving hope in him. But, (2d.) this is the chief glory of our souls, the revealing Christ *in* us. O for the reviving comfort of this, while we consider it. To reveal Christ in us, is to make such a clear discovery of the matchless charms and inestimable glory of

his person to our souls, which we never saw before: so that our hearts are enamoured with him; we choose him, love him, delight in him, and cleave to him in all his offices and characters. For by the eye of our soul, "we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, *full of grace and truth*" to us miserable sinners. Hence, he is the ONE beloved of our souls. Without this revelation of Jesus Christ in us, alas! what is all external profession? No more than mere task, dry formality, and heavy drudgery. O my soul! O my dear friends! be not content to live without a constant revelation of Christ to your souls. This makes the conscience peaceful, the heart happy, and the soul joyful. This inspires love, subdues lust, captivates the affections, makes the whole man happy in God, and creates heaven in the soul. If Christ is within, in the heart, all will be right and well without in the life. If you believe in Christ, as revealed in the word, this blessed promise is for you. Pray for its daily fulfilment, "I will manifest myself unto him." John 14:21.

"Light of those, whose dreary dwelling
Borders on the shades of death,
Come, and thy dear self revealing,
Dissipate the clouds beneath."

DECEMBER 27.

Ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS. Gal. 3:28.

Will a covetous man be contented with the notion that he is rich? If your body was in pain, would it give you ease, to think of a remedy, without experiencing its salutary effects? What avails all the refined notions of eternal union, without experiencing that the soul is vitally united to Christ, by the power of the Spirit, through faith? O my soul, I charge thee not to rest satisfied, with the notion of the doctrine of union, without the comforts of the grace of being united to Christ, and being one with him in heart and affection. O my Jesus, to thee I look and pray, to find and feel more and more the sweet experience of this. Give it my soul, out of thy fulness. Consider, (1st.) The persons here spoken of, *ye*. Ye Jews, who had the form of godliness, without the power: ye Gentile sinners, who once had neither the form nor the power of Christianity: ye apostate sinners, who yesterday were haters of God, at enmity against his law, rebels against his government, in league with sin, death, and hell, fighting under the prince of darkness: see what ye are now: behold what grace has done for you: see into whom it has implanted you. (2d.) "In Christ Jesus." Not only *in* the knowledge of him, faith *in* him, hope on him, and love to him: though all this is precious; but much more. Ye are mystically and spiritually united to Christ, as truly as your soul is to your body, your body to your head, or your hand to your body. Now Christ is your life, your husband, your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (1 Cor. 1:30.) Ye are complete—perfect in him, (Col. 2:10.) Simply believe this.

Look to Christ for the comfort of this. Glorify the Spirit for the grace of this. (3d.) "Ye are all ONE in Christ." Whether Jew or Gentile, churchman or dissenter, etc., we, being many (though of different denominations and opinions) are one body, (1 Cor. 10:17.) Christ is the head. We are all members in him, and of one another. As Luther says, "We have the same Christ; I, thou, and all the faithful, which Peter, Paul, and all the saints had." We are all in the same Jesus: have all one Father: one Comforter: and are of one Spirit. Then let this faith subdue all unholy strife, and excite all heavenly love to each other. O let us make it manifest that we are in Christ, by following him who is our peace, and by holding the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." Heb. 10:24.

Thou, sinners' only hope and friend,
Within my soul still reign;
Rule my heart, and put an end
To all my strife and pain.

Let faith, and love, and every grace,
Within me more abound;
That I may prove in ev'ry place,
That Jesus I have found.

DECEMBER 28.

Ye are dead, and your life is hid with CHRIST in GOD. Col. 3:3.

We are apt to mistake the words, and pervert the meaning of scripture. This charge is brought against us by Jeremiah: "Ye have perverted the words of the living God," (chap. 23:36.) This dejects our souls, robs Christ of the glory of our hearts, and prevents our holy and comfortable walk in him. See if this be not the case with respect to this text. Ye believers in Christ, are dead, (1st.) "to the law by the body of Christ," (Rom. 7:4.) Being one with Christ by faith, you are dead to all legal hopes, from your own works. (2d.) Dead to sin, being baptized into Christ by his Spirit. (Rom. 6:3.) (3d.) Dead to the world, being crucified with Christ, (Gal. 6:14.) O says one, and another sincere soul, I am not thus dead. I have no true faith. I find sin alive in me—legal hopes and fears cleaves to me—and too much love of the world in me, to my grief and burden. Behold, here is distress through mistake. St. Paul doth not say, all these things are dead in you; but ye are dead to them. So that you are not in subjection to them—they are your burden—you groan under, and long for deliverance from them, these are the clearest proofs that you partake of the life of Christ. Glory to Jesus for this. *Your life is hid.* Entirely from carnal men. They cannot see the spring and motive of your conduct. Marvel not that they deride you for it. Your life is often hid to yourself. When the dunghill of corruption's steam, temptation's smoke, the black exhalations of unbelief arise, and Christ our life withdraws his presence, then it is so hid, that we fear our life is dead. But that is as

impossible as for God to die. For our life is hid *with Christ*. Then it can never be lost. Who can deprive us of it? Not all the powers of sin, earth, or hell. True, they may and do often rob our souls of the comforts and joys of our spiritual life, because we do not live and walk close with Christ; but our life is safe and secure, while our all-conquering Head lives. For it is also *in God*. God the Father chose us to eternal life—God the Son redeemed us to it—God the Spirit bestowed it upon us, therefore we can never perish—none can pluck us out of God's hands. We need not fear any enemy. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" O believer, view your safety and security. Your enemies must first overcome, and take away the life of Christ and of God, before they can deprive you of your life which is hid in them. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Isa. 54:17.

DECEMBER 29.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3:4.

I have read a book consisting of stories, and to be told to the Sultan of Arabia, to prevent a bloody design of his against his Sultaness. The relater of the tales was her own sister. She always contrived to leave off in the midst of her story, which he was so delighted with, as to promise not to destroy her sister, till it was ended. Thus by protracting the execution, she saved her sister's life. Methinks there is no end to the history of Christ. Every fresh relation of him delights the believing soul, and excites an inclination to hear more of him again and again. For he averted the bloody execution of law and justice against us.—Every fresh tale of him strengthens our faith of salvation by him: sets our minds more and more against every evil, and stimulates us to every good. For, *Christ is our life*. O soul, can you ever believe too much of him, or hope too much in him? It is our fault, our shame, our misery, that we dwell no more on him, and converse no more with him. Is Christ thy life, O my soul? What sort of a life do I live? Jesus, wash me in thy blood. Lord, pardon me by thy grace. Favour my soul with fresh experience, that thou art my life: so be the death of all my sins, and the life of all my graces. O appear, appear, in the power of thy Spirit again and again in me, before thou shalt appear in thy power and glory to me. *Christ shall appear*. What are we looking at? Why stand we gazing on perishing objects? What are we waiting for? The Saviour? He *shall* appear. Perhaps the very next moment, as the Lord of life and death; he may say to the last enemy, Go, bring

that saved sinner to me, his life. O joyful word! Learn to welcome it. Faith will. For, "*We shall appear with him in glory.*" How shall we appear? In what we were by faith, were not ashamed of, but gloried in here. "Arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: the rich robe of Christ's obedience, which is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. 19:8.) Mind, this is *granted* to us. If it was our own righteousness, we have a right to appear in it. There needs no grant of it. But it is Christ's righteousness. Therefore a gift by grant to us. O remember, it is a sure and certain thing we *shall* appear (all the powers of hell cannot prevent it) with Christ in glory. *Only believe.* And you will love Christ, rejoice to obey him, and long for his appearing. O Jesus, my life, appear to my soul this night in all the power of faith, the joy of hope, the comfort of love, and the fellowship of peace.

DECEMBER 30.

Old things are passed away. 2 Cor. 5:17.

Such is the blessedness of every new creature in Christ. Every believer in him is a new creature. Mind, St. Paul does not say, Old things are *passing* away, but are *passed* away. We are not to understand him in an absolute, but in a qualified sense. For if none were new creatures, till all old things were passed away, we should not find one on this side heaven. Now the year is nearly at an end, do not you find your old corruptions cleaving to you? Yea, the old man still whole and alive in you, just as you did at the beginning of the year, or at the beginning of days, when you first believed on Jesus, and were made a new creature in him? Do not you also see just the same reason to comply with these exhortations, as at first? "Put off the old man which is corrupt." (Ephes. 4:22.) "Cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (2 Cor. 7:1.) Why, if so, how can it be said, "Old things *are* passed away?" Consider, St. Paul is not speaking of the old creation of fallen nature, but of the new creation in Christ Jesus. As men, and descendants from fallen Adam, all the sin and misery of our old nature abides with us. We are still in the flesh. In that dwells nothing but sin and evil. It is under the sentence, and must receive the wages of sin, death. But as believers in Christ, "we are passed from death to life." (John 5:24.) Being in him by faith, we are new creatures in a new creation. Observe, in the foregoing verse St. Paul is speaking of knowing Christ, and men after the flesh. But now, says he, we have done with carnal views and fleshly knowledge. We are spiritual. We view and know things by

faith, as new creatures in Christ. Hence, as we are passed from our old state, old things are passed away from us. Our old notions of God, of Christ, of salvation, our own free will, our legal righteousness, salvation by works, in whole or in part, etc., all are passed away. Yea, our delight in our old companions, in the bewitching vanities of this old world, which is under the curse, and our manner of living and walking in it, are passed away. Our old way of keeping Christmas holy-days, and concluding the old year, in card-playing and vanity is past away. And if, for conscience sake, we do not keep days by any religious observation of them, we do not spend them in our old way, by "making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." O says one, I would not keep Christmas for the world. It is superstitious. Pray then do not keep it for the devil and the flesh. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5:25.

The soul that's born again in Christ,
Is quite in a new state:
With perfect righteousness is blest;
Old things are out of date.

DECEMBER 31.

He who endureth to the end shall be saved. Matt. 10:22.

We have now arrived to the end of another year. Look back with humility. Look up with hope. Look forward with joy. For consider what great things God hath done for us. "Now is our salvation nearer, than when we first believed," (Rom. 13:11.) Salvation, O the joyful sound! But, before the Sun of righteousness arose upon us, and displayed the glory of his finished salvation to our hearts, alas! what dark, proud, ignorant notions of salvation, did we entertain? Instead of seeing righteousness as a gift by Jesus Christ, and justification of life coming by free gift, and eternal life the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, (Rom. 5:17, 18. chap. 6:23.) we vainly thought that salvation was to be obtained by our fulfilling certain terms and conditions. In our natural state of blindness, before we saw Jesus, we thought, enduring to the end, was the condition of being saved. Now we see we are "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation," (Isa. 45:17.) Yet some, who do not clearly see the glory of Christ's salvation, are puzzling themselves and others, with the notion of a conditional salvation. If salvation is put upon our conditions, it behooves us to consider what conditions we are to perform, in order to be saved. Every command may be considered as a condition. If we multiply them by four times forty-five, we shall come vastly short of their number. And we may be sure we shall never get to the end, so as to be saved by fulfilling them. O the arrogance of bankrupt sinners, whose case is desperate, and yet think of standing upon terms and conditions, with the most high God! But say some, though of

ourselves we can do nothing, yet God enables us by His grace, to perform the conditions of salvation. This is just like a creditor, demanding a large sum of an insolvent debtor, who replies, I cannot pity you—I am not worth one farthing. But, says the creditor, I will come to terms with you. If you will pay me one shilling in the pound, on that condition, I will forgive you the whole debt. Says the penniless debtor, If you will assist me with the money, I will fulfil your condition. Strange compact! If we must have conditions of salvation, they are all to be reduced to this one, If you will save yourselves to the end, you shall be saved in the end. Consider the evil of this proud, unscriptural notion, and reject it. (1st.) While we are taken up with finding these conditions, striving to fulfil them, and looking for salvation by them, we sadly overlook precious Jesus, his blood and righteousness, and awfully depreciate and set at nought his finished salvation. And (2d.) We shall walk on very unhappily, and in the end, shall be very uncomfortable. What! If we strive to fulfil God's law? Yes, if we reject his counsel of salvation, by free gift, of free grace, through the one atonement and righteousness of his beloved Son, to make way for our terms and conditions of salvation. So, (3d.) we shall bring ourselves into bondage. Says St. Paul, "I testify to every man who is circumcised (does any work as a condition, to be justified and saved) that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of none effect to him." As he seeks to be justified by the law, he is *fallen from grace*. (Gal. 5:3,4.) O brethren! beware, instead of enduring to the end by faith, that you do not stumble and fall at the very beginning through pride. But we began the year, *seeing Jesus*. We set out on our race with this free-grace truth, "When we had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave us

all." (Luke 7:42.) O in this blessed sight, and with this precious faith, let us endure to the end. In, and under all, that we have to endure, from a corrupt nature, a wicked world, and a subtle, malicious devil, nothing can bring relief to our consciences, patience to our minds, hope to our hearts, peace to our souls, and joy to our spirits, but looking unto Jesus. In him we see salvation-work for ever done for us. We hear and believe his cry from the cross, "*It is finished.*" We hear him proclaim from his throne in glory, "*It is done,*" I am Alpha and Omega, "the beginning and end of salvation." (Rev. 21:6.) "We are chosen in him to salvation." We know this. How? "Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2:13.) "Christ, of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:30.) In the faith of this we persevere. "By faith we endure (every fight of affliction) seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11:27.) We "run with patience the race set before us"—How? Looking to terms and conditions of salvation fulfilled by us? O no! But "looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12:2.) Consider that precious word, you who are ready to think your faith will not hold out to the end: the same Jesus who is the author, will be the finisher of your faith. While legal hearts work for life and salvation, it is the glory of gospel faith to live upon Jesus, to derive every grace and blessing from him, and to enjoy life and salvation in him, every step we take in the way to endless life and glory. Therefore in spite of all the deceitfulness of sin, and the art and malice of Satan, we shall "receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls." 1 Pet. 1:9.

Look up for persevering grace

To Jesus your best friend,
And hope to see his smiling face,
Enduring to the end.

Fear to turn back or slight the ways
Of truth and holiness;
For Jesus' lavish of his grace,
And will with glory bless.

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